ALI
SHARIATI'S

# MARTYRDOM: ARISE AND BEAR WITNESS

Translated by
Ali Asghar Ghassemy

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Ali Asghar Ghassemy

The Ministry of Islamic Guidance

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In the Name of God, the Almighty, the Powerful, who is Wrathful against oppressors or, as Abuzar says, "Lord of the deprived *(mostaz'afin).*"

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*Chapters One and Two were lectures delivered by Ali Shariati at the Hoseiniyyeh Ershad during the month of Moharram, 1972. Chapter Three was a lecture delivered at the Narmak Mosque, March 3, 1971.*

## Translator's Preface

In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

It is still too early to make a thorough study to be able to judge the Islamic Revolution of Iran for it requires a study of all of the aspects which were effective in its foundation, rise, development and victory.

The first point which attracts the attention of anyone who is going to study this unique Revolution is that its ideology is essentially based on the ideology of Islam and, in particular, that found in Shi'ism.

The principles of Shi'ite ideology as Imam Hosein (the third Shi'ite Imam who was martyred) says is that life is nothing other than faith (or idea, *aqideh*) and jihad (inner and outer spiritual and religious struggle).

Shi'ite ideology cannot be explained in a few words, but jihad which exists in Shi'ite ideology, is a battle which has martyrdom as one of its goals. Martyrdom, in this school of thought, means a purposeful, aware and willing selection.

A great deal has been said and written about martyrdom over the ages, but no one has explained it, interpreted it and made its meaning so clear as Ali Shariati, whose thoughts, ideas, views, books, writings and lectures were some of the important factors in the foundation, rise development and victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

We have endeavoured to present as accurate a translation as is possible of *Martyrdom: Arise and Bear Witness.* We ask the reader to forgive us any transgressions which may appear and we welcome any suggestions for future printings.

Wassalam.

A.A. Ghassemy

## Editor's Preface

To return to Karbala is to return to martyrdom and those who arose and bore witness, bore witness to their covenant with God, agreed to on that sacred day long ago — so long ago that it forms part of the collective unconscious — the day when God said, "Am I not thy Lord?" and we answered, "Yea, we do bear witness." (The Qoran 7:172). On that sacred day we committed ourselves as human beings responsible to God, passively responsible for the protection of the earth, for safe guarding all of God's creation and His creatures, actively responsible for the ridding of all of that which destroys God's creation and His creatures.

In this activated capacity, we have a solemn duty to fight oppression and injustice with whatever means are available to us. Some are able to fight with the sword, others with the Word but our beloved Imam Hosein found a third way. He fought for the Truth and what he believed in with his life — he offered martyrdom as the alternative and God accepted it.

On the plains of Karbala near the ancient city of Babylon in 680 A.D. Imam Hosein and his family and his companions were martyred by Yazid.

Imam Hosein, the third Shi'ite Imam, son of Hazrat Ali and Fatima and thereby, grandson of the Prophet of Islam, is known as the king of martyrs, *shah-i-shahidan* for it was he who sacrificed his life by bearing witness to

Islam.

Imam Hosein was about 56 years old when the Omayyid Caliph, Mo'awiyyah died. He had been Imam for ten years (since the murder of his brother , Imam Hasan who had been killed by Mo'awiyyah.)

Imam Hosein lived under the most difficult outward conditions of suppression and persecution. Religious laws had lost most of their credit as Shariati tells us. The laws of the Omayyid government had gained complete control. Mo'awiyyah made use of every possible means to obliterate the name of Ali and the family of the Prophet. He wanted to strengthen his son, Yazid's position. Thus Imam Hosein had to endure these difficulties from Mo'awiyyah. When he died and his son Yazid assumed the Caliphate, Imam Hosein underwent even greater hardship.

He realized that he must leave Medina for Mecca as Yazid ordered the governor of Medina to force Imam Hosein to give his allegiance to him. To give allegiance in the Islamic tradition was vital for the continued existence of a government. Without the allegiance of the strongest existent forces, a government would not stay in power for long. To withhold one's allegiance was considered to be a crime and brought disgrace and dishonor. Following the example of the Prophet, people believed that allegiance, when given by free will and not through force, carried authority and weight.

Mo'awiyyah had realized that putting pressure upon the Imam would only to serve to push an acceptable situation to the breaking point. Yazid did not pay heed to the last will of his father which was not to force the allegiance of Imam Hosein. Rather, he immediately began

pushing for the oath of allegiance. Imam Hosein fled to Mecca and sought refuge within the Ka'ba. He remained in that city for four months and during that time he received letters and pledges from the entire Islamic world asking for his help in overthrowing the oppressive Omayyid rule. In particular, he was invited by the people of Kufa to come and live among them and rule them.

So we find Imam Hosein not able to turn back to Medina for he would, by so doing, sanction a government of injustice and tyranny. He would be expressing public contempt of Islam. He could not betray Islam by such an act even though he knew it meant certain death for him. To go forward to Kufa also had its dangers for the people were not completely trustworthy.

He decided to go forward. Through this decision, he sealed his fate. The journey he undertook towards Kufa was a journey towards the place where his father, Hazrat Ali had been killed 20 years earlier.

He sent his cousin, Muslim ibn 'Aqil, to Kufa to see what the situation was like. Ibn Muslim was at first successful in receiving many pledges from the people of Kufa. He sent the pledges and good tidings of the people of Kufa to Imam Hosein. Once Imam Hosein received the pledges and news from Ibn Muslim, he, his companions and his family began the journey towards Kufa.

Meanwhile, Yazid heard of the work of Ibn Muslim and was most disturbed. He sent orders to his son to put a stop to the activities of Imam Hosein's emissary. Ibn Muslim was then murdered by Yazid's son, Ibn Zayd.

Only a few days journey from Kufa, Imam Hosein learned of the murder of Muslim and his sons. In spite of this news and other warnings which he had received,

Imam Hosein refused to turn back and instead, continued moving towards Kufa. He heard that guards were located at all the city gates and that he would be prevented from entering the city. He continued moving forward marching towards his death.

Approximately seventy kilometers from Kufa, in a desert named Karbala, the Imam and his entourage were surrounded by the army of Yazid. For eight days they stayed in this spot during which time the circle narrowed and the number of the enemy's army increased. Finally the Imam with his household and a small number of companions were encircled by an army of thirty thousand soldiers. The enemy cut them off from the Euphrates and they all suffered great thirst in the very hot desert of Karbala.

The Imam spoke to his companions, inviting them to leave him for to remain would mean certain death. He told them that the enemy only wanted his person and none of them were under obligation to stay. Traditionally 72 persons are said to have participated in the battle of Karbala.

On the tenth day of Moharram of the year 680 A.D., the Imam lined up before the enemy with his small band of followers, less than ninety persons consisting of forty of his companions, thirty some members of the army of the enemy that joined him during the night and day of war and his Hashimite family of children, brothers, nephews, nieces and cousins. That day they fought from morning until their final breath, and the Imam, the young Hashimites and the companions were all martyred.

**The Resonance of Karbala**

Karbala resonates in the life of the Iranian people and has done so for exactly 1300 years. The reverberations of this resonance can most clearly be seen in 'living art.'

The inspiration of martyrdom begins when the 'living artist' 'makes his or her intentions known' *(niyyat kardan)*. This 'intention' inspires the heart and soul of that person to express something which is greater than the individual.

This inspiration cannot be measured. It affects 'living art' as well as the 'art of living', individual and social manifestations of religious inspiration.

The individual as living art, begins forming at birth and continually changes until the form is completed at death. Due to the varying factors which cause the changes in the form, the influence of a particular event is difficult to relate to the form. That is, there is an indirect influence of cultural and social factors which pressure the form much as the fingertips of a sculptor working with clay. In the end, the form is rounded and smoothed and the effect of the fingertips is concealed.

Ibn Arabi, the 12th century, A.D. Islamic metaphysician, described the interplay between the conscious and unconscious elements of an artisan to his work in the following way: 'Looking at an artisan (knower) who is engaged in moulding things out of clay (that which is to be known), one might make a superficial observation that the clay in the hands of the artisan is sheer passivity, sheer non-action. One overlooks the important fact that, in reality, the clay for its own part positively determines

the activity of the artisan. Surely the artisan can make a variety of things out of clay, but whatever one may do, one cannot go beyond the narrow limits set by the very nature of the clay. Otherwise expressed, the nature of the clay itself determines the possible forms in which it may be actualized.

The concept of martyrdom: to arise and bear witness has, in a sense, become so much a part of Shi'ite ideology that one can refer to it as a rite, a ritual, which activates the 'living artist' or individual to become 'Hosein-like' for 'being Hosein' as Ali Shariati presents him belongs to Hosein alone.

## Chapter One: Martyrdom

It is difficult for me to speak today about martyrdom as today marks the Shi'ites anniversary of the martyrdom of Imam Hosein ( ع ).

There has been much written and said and much continues to be written and said about Imam Hosein and the role he played in history. The ancients have explained him one way and the innovating intellectuals in another. But as I realized recently, we cannot know what Imam Hosein has done without understanding what the meaning of martyrdom really is.

The greatness of Hosein, on the one hand, and the individualistic views of him have caused that which is greater than Hosein himself to be concealed by the radiance of his charisma. That which is greater than Hosein is that which Hosein was sacrificed for. We have always spoken about Hosein but we have rarely spoken about the purpose for which Hosein so generously sacrificed himself.

Today I intended to speak about the concept of the sacrifice which Hosein and those like him have made and the greatness of such self-sacrifices in the history of mankind and our religion.

And so, in the presence of the people, the created and of the Creator, I would like to cite that idea and say something of its meaning as it has been demonstrated by the sum total of their lives and deaths, that idea called 'martyrdom'.

It is a difficult task. To begin with, my knowledge and my intellectual capability do not permit me to perform such a difficult assignment. The contradictory

pattern which this issue follows (at least with respect to myself) makes my position even more difficult.

On the one hand, I must present martyrdom from an intellectual, scientific and philosophical point of view. I can only use my head. Only science and logic can assist me.

On the other hand, the story of martyrdom and that which martyrdom challenges is so sensitive, so belovedly exciting that it pulls the spirit towards the fire. It paralyzes logic. It weakens speech. It even makes thinking difficult. Martyrdom is a mixture of a refined love and a deep, complex wisdom. One cannot express these two at the same time and so, as a result, one cannot do them justice.

In particular, for a person such as myself, who is emotionally and spiritually weak, it is even more difficult. But I will try my best and I hope to succeed in communicating some of the things which it is my intention to express.

In order to understand the meaning of martyrdom, the ideological school from which it takes its meaning, its expression and its value should be clarified.

In European and Western languages,[1] a martyr is one who chooses 'death' in the defense of his beliefs against his enemy where the only way for him is to die. But the words, **martyrdom: arise and bear witness,** which exist in Islamic culture to express or name the one who has chosen 'death' has quite a different meaning from that of the western word, martyrdom. This shows one of the differences between Islamic and non-Islamic rites.

In European countries, the word martyr stems from 'mortal' which means 'death' or 'to die'. One of the basic principles in Islam and in particular in Shi'ite

culture, however is 'sacrifice and bear witness'. So instead of martrydom, i.e. death, it essentially means 'life', 'evidence', 'testify', 'certify'. These words: martyrdom and bearing witness show the differences which exist between the vision of Shi'ite Islamic culture and the other cultures of the world.

**Its School of Thought**

[Therefore] in order to understand the concept of martyrdom, we should study it within the context of the school of thought and action which it is based upon, and in the school of thought of which Hosein is the manifestation par excellence. In the flow and struggle of history in the story of mankind, Hosein is the standard bearer of this struggle and his Karbala, a battlefied among battlefields, is the only link uniting the various fronts, the various generations and the various ages, throughout history from the beginning until the present moment and flowing on into the future.

Hosein's meaning becomes clear when we understand his relationship to that flow of movements which we have discussed in earlier lectures which historically begins with Abraham. This meaning should be made clear and Hosein's revolution must be interpreted. To view Hosein and the battle of Karbala as isolated from historical and social circumstances would force us, as indeed it has for many of us, to view the man and the event purely as an unfortunate, if not tragic occurence in the past and something for us to merely cry about (and we certainly do continue to cry) rather than as an eternal and transcendent phenomenon. To separate Karbala and Hosein from their historical and ideological context is to dissect a living

body, to remove only a part of it and to examine it in exclusion of the living system of the body.

**Two Classes of Prophets**

As I have mentioned in my previous lectures, throughout the whole history of humanity, religious movements, whether related to the contents of the religions, and conduct of the prophets and founders of the religion or to the social class connections of the leaders of the religion and to what they were calling the people to, are divided into two classes. According to this classification, all of the historical prophets, whether true or false, as well as anyone who has begun a religious movement, are divided into two different classes:

The first group belongs to the religious chain founded by Abraham. This chain of prophets, from the historical point of view, are nearer to us and therefore we know them better. They consist of prophets whose view of society arose from the most deprived social and economic class of a society. As Mohammad ( ص ) said, all of these prophets were either shepherds, as history shows us, they grazed sheep, or a few were simple hungry artisans or workers.

These prophets stand in contrast with the messengers of the other group or founders of intellectual and moral schools of thoughts such as those in China, India, Iran and the founders of the scientific and ethical schools of Athens. This latter group, without a single exception, were aristocrats. They arose from the noble, powerful, comfortable classes of their society.

Throughout history, the powerful rulers of society have been one of three groups: the powerful, the wealthy

and the clergy. They exercised political and economic power with each other and control over the faith of the people. They co-operated with each other in ruling the people. Their collaboration, whether or not they shared the same views, was in order to rule the people and for the sake of the people.

All of the non-Abrahamic messengers from Indo-China to Athens were either connected on their mother's side or their father's side or even both sides to emperors, clergymen and aristocrats. This holds true for Confucius, Laotzu, Buddha, Zoroaster, Mani, Mazdak, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Whereas the Qoran emphasizes, "We appointed among the ordinary people, a Prophet from themselves." (3:163). They were ordinary people from the masses and among the community. Thus the Abrahamic prophets arose from the mass of the people.

This does not mean that they did not have an angelic dimension or that they did not hold absolute powers and were only human beings. It means they were appointed from among the ordinary mass of people rather than relating to a special, noble, and selective class of society.

Some people believe that because the Prophet of Islam arose from among the Arabs, he should speak Arabic, or Moses, who was appointed to the Jewish people, should speak Hebrew. It is obvious that a Prophet appointed from amongst the Arabs cannot speak a language other than Arabic.

The important thing is to speak in the language of ordinary people which means to speak the tongue and use the idioms which the mass of that community understands. In order to speak about their needs or troubles in a language which is understandable to them, and not

as philosophers, poets, intellectuals, scholars and educated people, they must use a language and idioms which people are familiar with. But, neither do they understand the thoughts and emotions of the ordinary people nor do they understand their language. This still can be noted everywhere. When we discuss the Abrahamic prophets, we are talking about the people, for the mission of these prophets differs from that of the other.

The mission of the non-Abrahamic messengers is always related to the existing power structure so that power supports these messengers' ideas. The Abrahamic prophets, on the other hand, were always supported by the ordinary people against the powerful rulers of their time.

Look at Abraham. As soon as God appointed him, he wielded his mace to destroy the idols. Moses took up his shepherd's staff and stormed Pharaoh's palace. He brought down the wealthy and powerful Croesus, buried him in the earth and drowned Pharaoh in the sea. And the Prophet of Islam first went through a stage of individual development, then began his spiritual struggle. Within a period of 10 years, he fought 65 battles, that is, every 50 days, a battle, a military encounter. The miracles of the Abrahamic prophets are also in accordance with their mission. The turning of the staff into a serpent was used to destroy wizardry and to attack the Pharaoh's throne.

The Qoran clearly announces the principle that Islam is not a new religion because, in fact, throughout history, there has only been one religion. Every prophet was appointed to establish this religion in accordance with the circumstances of the time and in compliance

with the needs of that era.

There is only one religion and its name is Submission *"islam"*. Through this announcement, the Prophet universalizes it and gives the idea of Submission a universal, historical viewpoint. He relates the Islamic movement to other movements which have, throughout history been fought to free people. They have stood up, risen against the powerful, the wealthy and the deceivers. In this way, they have shown their unity of vision: one spiritual struggle, one religion, one spirit and one slogan throughout the whole of humanity's history in all domains, all times and all generations.

Let us take a look at this verse of the Qoran and consider its historical context and choice of words and see how the historical perspective is expressed in the Qoran and see how it places these movements one after the other.

"Those who disbelieve in the signs of God and slay the Prophets without right and slay such men as bid to justice. . ." (3:21)

We see that in this verse three points are connected to each other. First, the signs of God, second, Prophets and third, men who call for equality in opposing the disbelievers. The Prophets and men of justice are put on one level. We see how a type of social encounter and philosophy of human history and description of previous movements is expressed in the Qoran.

The Prophet of Islam is the last messenger of this religion of Submission, which throughout history, as the Qoran has repeatedly shown, the Prophets came to bring. Their message consisted of wisdom, the Book and justice for the world. The Prophet of Islam is the

last messenger of this world and human movement who, in the name of Submission *(islam)* called the people to serve God and the One so that they would be freed from obeying and serving any other than Him.

The Prophet of Islam came to confirm the universal view of Unity *(towhid)* and even to bring that unity into human history, to all races, nations, groups, families and social classes and to eliminate the discord brought by polytheistic religions. The slogan of Islamic unity was a slogan which gave freedom. Before intellectuals, scholars, the educated and philosophers became aware of it, slaves, the tortured, hungry and the belittled were sensitive to and aware of it. It is because of this that the group which gathered around Mohammad in Mecca were among the most deprived, who had been belittled and were among the most debased elements of society. The Prophet of Islam was scorned by his enemies because only the dregs of humanity surrounded him. This is the greatest praise today for this movement while we see that the leaders of the Buddhist religion are all of the nobles and aristocrats of China and India. Today, values have changed!

This is why the Prophet of Islam marked the turning point for slaves who, throughout history, were certain that their fate was slavery. Slaves and the debased were convinced by the tongue of religion, science, philosophy or with the tongue of the day or with poetry or art that their fate was to serve their masters and they believed that they existed solely to experience suffering, to carry heavy loads and to go hungry, so that others might receive pleasure. They were born and created for this.

This deprived class who were convinced that the

gods or God were their enemy, believed that in order for the world to function and for the performance of the jobs of the people, they were created as porters in order to carry the loads. Or as the Prophet Mani had said when speaking of light and darkness, "The wretched and defeated are of the essence of darkness and the conquerors are of the essence of light." Aristotle and Plato, intellectual geniuses that they were, had said "God or nature has created some as slaves of creation and others as free so that the slaves perform the ordinary jobs and the free ones can then be free to attend to the higher affairs such as morals, poetry, music and civilization."

The Prophet of Islam had been appointed in order to complete the movement which had existed throughout history against deception, falsehood, polytheism, creation of discord, hypocrisy, aristocracy and class differences which were all made an object of the spiritual struggle and by announcing that all of humanity is of one race, one source, one nature and one God, to declare equality for all, with philosophical explanation and by fighting an economically powerful regime to maintain social equity.

Take the model society of Medina as an example where Balal, a debased slave was recognized as more noble and of greater value and was treated with more respect than the aristocrats of Arab society. Everyone accepted his position. Suddenly the inhabitants of Medina, the Arabs, Jews, the Qoraish find themselves greeting the young slave of Hozaifah as an equal, he who had once gone about in the narrow streets as a debased and deprived slave, now, in the Ghoba Mosque standing for prayer in front of the noble Emigrants of the Qoraish, is one of the

dearest, most radiant figures. The most distinguished personages of the pre-Islamic era and even of the present ones are praying behind him.

All values were shattered when the Prophet himself began his efforts to destroy all of the values of ignorance and aristocratic thinking. He instructed them to shorten the long, flowing robes they wore and to trim their long beards which were signs of aristocracy. He ordered people not to strut with pride in the streets. He instructed people to ride two at a time on horseback. One would ride in front and another behind. Sometimes, in order to break down the values of the aristocracy in the eyes of the people, he would ride a donkey bare back.

One day an old woman, who had for many years heard of the greatness and magnificence of the Prophet, came before him. She stood tongue tied in awe of his presence. The Prophet, softly, kindly and simply took her by the shoulder and said, "Why are you afraid? I am the son of that Qoraish woman who milked sheep. Who are you afraid of?"

When this shepherd, who was the last appointed Prophet, the last messenger for those who suddenly arose out of silent deserts and assaulted the lords of power, wealth and deceit in the cities, died, suddenly everything was different. Discrepancies appeared immediately upon his death. The path of historical events did not deviate from the true way more than a centimeter at first. The angle which appeared between the School of Islam and the History of Islam, between the truth and reality was narrow at the beginning. But after the Prophet died, the gap between them grew wider and wider. It was like the angle between two lines which are at first close

together (no more than a thousandth of a centimeter apart) but gradually the distance expands as history moves forward. The two lines widen so that in an eternity there are kilometers of space between them. If other factors and causes become operative as they do, we may see that the two lines which extend from an angle move apart as the line of history from the line of the truth of Islam has done in this case.

**Deviations Appear**

Thus after the death of the Prophet, the deviation, so very slight at first, developed and generation after generation, the distance between honesty, rectitude, truth and justice progressed so that after 14 or 15 years when we reach Othman he, like a magnetic pole, attracted all of the counter-revolutionary agents who were scattered here and there. He gathered them at the center of Islamic power and the Islamic movement.Othman served as a link between the mentality of the age of ignorance and the Islamic revolutionary period. His link was the Caliphate which served as a bridge for the most despicable elements of the rejected aristocracy who still lingered on. They ursurped the positions which had been gained through the spiritual struggle of the Emigrants and the helpers.

Othman bridged the gap and across his bridge of the Othman Caliphate passed the dirtiest, half-dead, rejected agents of aristocracy. They took positions which had been gained through the *jihad* [religious and spiritual struggle] of the Emigrants and of the Companions of the Prophet.

Othman acted as the instrument of the Omayyids, the basest enemies of Islam, and, through him, they not

only made up for the blows they had received at the time of the Prophet, but they appropriated the successes of the Revolution as well.

This kind of setback has repeated itself over and over again throughout the course of Islamic history to the point of becoming a rule – I do not mean to say a necessary rule – that a revolution necessarily devours its children. But Othman allowed the faithful children of the Revolution to be devoured. Those who wielded their swords and pursued their jihad with faith, self-sacrifice, devotion and endurance were destroyed by the oppressors and usurpers of power, government, the rights of the people and the heritage of the Revolution. The founder of the movement and the first sacrifice of Othman and the Omayyids who dominated him was Ali ( ع ), a victim of the revival of the Age of Ignorance by the surviving counter-revolutionaries. The political, social and international make-up of Ali was the representative par excellence of a new struggle, a struggle between the leaders and the loyalists of the new set of values, of the new faith, who rose up with new and true slogans of Islam and found themselves confronting the greed and worst elements of the revival of the rule of ignorance which was imposed with a new fervor. These usurpers, with new vigor, both openly and undercover, launched their struggle against the noblest figures of the Islamic Revolution.

The Prophet is the manifestation of the struggle of an age in which, on the one hand, true, believing Moslems confronted foreign enemies who were known to be anti-Moslem, while Ali is the manifestation of an age in which an internecine struggle took place between the loyal, faithful and anti-movement elements who had donned

the masks of faith.

The struggle between the Prophet and Abu Sufiyan [who as an opportunist only accepted Islam when his party was finally defeated] was an external struggle, a battle purely and simply between friend and foe. Whereas in contrast, the struggle between Ali and Mo'awiyyah, the son of Abu Sufiyan was an internal affair between friend and pseudo-friend or should we say, 'an internal enemy', theoretically supporting the movement. The battle on the foreign field, the struggle with the external foe, resulted in victory whereas the internecine struggle with the internal foe ended in defeat. This is what is described in Islamic terminology, in the language of the Qoran, as 'hypocrites' *(monafiqin)* — those who are more base and more dangerous than an out and out atheist *(kafir)* or even a polytheist *(moshrik)*. The Prophet is thus the manifestation of Islamic victory on the foreign front, over outright atheism and polytheism, whereas Ali is the manifestation of Islamic defeat within the ranks, at the hands of hypocrisy.

Confronting the 'neo-ignorance' and 'neo-aristocracy', which comes to life within the context of Islam under the cover of Tfuth and the very heart of the justice-seeking Revolution of Islam, Ali is the base of resistance. For many years, Ali struggles and strives against polytheism within his ranks, a polytheism which has cloaked itself in the dress of Unity *(towhid)*. He has to grapple with the atheist who has assumed the mantle of Islam and who has positioned the Qoran on the point of the lance [at the battle of Saffein]. In the end, Ali is killed by pious but unconscious people who always become tools at the hands of a sharp enemy.

As we move forward in time, the true base of the Islamic Revolution becomes increasingly weakened, while in contrast, the base of neo-ignorance and the internal enemies grows ever stronger until we reach the age of Imam Hasan ( ع ) (660 A.D., 40 A.H., the eldest son of Ali ( ع ) and Fatima ( ع ) ).

Imam Hasan is the inheritor of Ali's administration and becomes commander of an army in which hypocrisy has developed affecting even his closest friends. His best commanding officers are secretly tied in with the plotting of the Omayyids in negotiating with the tender of money, power, and promises. Those officers are bargaining their souls with Mo'awiyyah and his court, purchasers of humanity and honor, in Damascus. From the administrative point of view, Hasan has no authority over one of the most powerful, dangerous and sensitive sections of the Islamic domain (the province of Syria) which has entirely fallen into the hands of the enemy. In Iraq, the various factions are in dissention. The aristocrats can not remain loyal to the Alavite regime. The masses are neglected and indifferent.

The Khajirites, who are from amongst the most fanatic zealots and a dangerous power in the populace, confronted Imam Hasan who is the manifestation of the last struggle of the dearest, most aware and most progressive companions of the new Islamic movement. The ranks of the hypocrisy of the internal enemy is growing stronger day by day until the agonizing and catastrophic moment of the last struggle to defend the Islam of justice against the Islam of aristocracy. The only alternative is to make peace. He has been defeated. A defeated party does not specify the terms of a peace treaty. They are

imposed upon him. Hasan is broken.

Thus, Hasan, who is the leader and manifestation of the spirit of the struggle of the Revolution, sits in resistance to the reawakened neo-ignorance. He is disarmed and like an ordinary soldier when we see within the very household of the Imam and leader of the people, turncoats and Omayyid spies, those who had broken bread with him, turn against him. They even buy off his wife and, through her, have Hasan poisoned. We can see to what extent the justice, freedom and the people have weakened. It reaches the point that the power of Imam Hasan, the leader of a force which is still resisting today and defending the name of Islam, has so dwindled that when he dies, he can not be buried next to the Prophet (his grandfather) in Medina, the city of his grandfather, father and mother and the city of his family, the city of the Emigrants and Helpers of the Prophet of Islam. Imam Hasan is buried in the public cemetery of Baqia.

Imam Hasan, the manifestation of loneliness and isolation in Islamic society, even in the Medina of the Prophet, clearly shows how the Truth-seeking party in Islam is utterly shattered. The new force of revolution completely overwhelms every one and every thing and conquers in every domain. Now it is Hosein's turn.

**Imam Hosein**

Hosein inherits the Islamic movement. He is the inheriotor of a movement which Mohammad has launched, Ali has continued and in whose defense Hasan makes the last defense. Now there is nothing left for Hosein to inherit, no army, no weapons, no wealth, no power, no force, not even an organized following. Nothing at all.

It is now around the year 60 A.H. (680 A.D.), fifty years after the death of the Prophet. Each Imam chooses the form his struggle will take. (Please pay special attention from here on to what I am trying to express. This is where I am getting to my main point.)

The form of the struggle of each Imam and each leader is not based upon his own personal tastes, but it has to take shape to fit the circumstances, and evaluate the factions, and the nature of the enemy's strength and formation.

Thus the shape of the struggle which Hosein chooses cannot be understood without taking into account the nature of the circumstances in which Hosein launchs his particular revolt. Now, when Hosein's turn comes, the times and the people are looking for a man. How difficult it is when such a situation arises – sometimes the fate of a nation, the fate of a faith, an idea, a society, a generation is looking to an individual or several individuals in anticipation of how they will act.

Now the responsibility of safe-guarding the revolution has fallen upon Hosein's shoulders at a time when the last bastions of resistance have been lost. Nothing has remained for him from the power of his grandfather, his father, his brother, the Islamic government or the party of Truth and justice, not a sword, not a single soldier.

The Omayyids have occupied every base of society. For years, the Qoraish, in their neo-ignorance, dominated the values and mis-appropriated the fruits of the Islamic Revolution. It is years since the convergence of the Islamic Revolution has been pulled apart and the companions and the early strugglers of the Revolution, the disciples of the school of Mohammad, have fallen into three groups.

The first group, the one which refuses to tolerate the perversion of the movement and stands up and dies for their cause, by the year 60 A.H., have all disappeared. Abuzar is no more. Ammar, Abdollah ibn Mas'oud, Meitham, Hojr ibn Adi have all passed away.

The second group are those who have retreated into a quiet corner. They busy themselves with prayer and ascetic devotion in difficult times which ask for worship in the form of self-sacrifice in which true Moslems have neither conquered nor been blessed with martyrdom but have been tortured in prison. They have found another way. Instead of seeking heaven on the battlefields through the ranks of jihad, they strive for it in retreat through ascetic disciplines and retiring in the meditations of divine love, long fasting and mortification, self-abnegation and superagatory prayers. The prime example of this group is Abdollah ibn Omar.

These great figures are those who, during the age, the very moments in which the masses of Moslems are being lashed by the whips and slain by the swords of the agents of the Omayyids, who are looking towards their rising up and resisting – those who are fostered in the Islamic Revolution and had struggled shoulder to shoulder with the Prophet – at the moment when they should have taken a stand on the field of spiritual combat, they retreat to the corners of the mosques in the silence of mortification.

Who are the best Moslem figures who are sacrificed while the devout retreat from the agents of oppression and disbelief? Yes, those who at such times have left the field of combat and have crawled off into the niche of the mosque, away from society? Their hands are pol-

luted with crime, polluted with the blood of the pure hearted heroes and even with their very own blood.

The conscious person feels his responsibility and recognizes the difference between right and wrong; if he retires into solitary devotion, it is as if he had directly sacrificed a free and conscious mojahed [one engaged in religious and spiritual struggle] to the advantage of the oppressor. This sacrifice may even be himself. He is a criminal who commits a crime even if it be without pay or through blackmail. He sacrifices the best elements of faith in favor of disbelief. These are the worst elements. They commit suicide at the feet of the oppressor.

The third group are those Companions who had abandoned the battlefield in full awareness. They are from the contingent that fought at Badr, Ohod and Hosein, and the Medina of the jihad and the Prophet's migration and side by side with the Prophet of Islam, sold off the honors they had gathered directly to Mo'awiyyah in his Green Palace. They collected their money by selling their accounts of what the Prophet said and did at the rate of a dinar per tradition. These people included Abu Darda, Abu Horareh and Abu Mosa. Abu Horareh, being a companion who was always beside the Prophet of Islam, was known as the companion who specialized in the science of hadith (relating the Traditions of the Prophet). He had attained such eminence in the Omayyid court that Yazid (the son and successor of Mo'awiyyah to the Caliphate) employed him as a go-between to seek the favors of Oreinab, the wife of Abdollah ibn Salam.

Now what do you suppose the young people think when presented with such a situation? Here it is the time of Hosein. It is only the second generation after the

Revolution: a generation has grown up who did not experience that glorious time, those precious victories, the zeal and love as the Companions had. To hear such things from the tongue of one of these Companions drew love away from the hearts of the youth. All of their hopes, faith, thoughts had rested in the Companions who had been trained in the Revolution.

When everyday they see one of their heroes fall, what disappointment, what loss of faith must be their experience in that thing that they call Islam. This is the fate of the Companions, yesterday's generation, the generation of the age of the Prophet, the age of the revolution.

But the second generation, which comes to the fore, full of excitement, zeal and spirit – whether experienced or not – ready for the struggle against the order of the neo-ignorance, are nevertheless aware of what is going on. The manifestation and leader of the second generation of the Revolution is Hojr ibn Adi. Hojr had been a youngster at the time of the Prophet. He had grown to be a youth at the time of Ali and then entered the arena at the time of Hasan. He has statesman-like qualities. He is responsible and an aware mojahed. At the time of the peace treaty between Imam Hasan and Mo'awiyyah, he had been one of the most vigorous and radical opponents of Imam Hasan's signing of the treaty. He had even gone so far as to chide the Imam, saying, "You have really humiliated the people by doing this!"

He is a zealous and fiery revolutionary but Imam Hasan takes him aside at Medina and quietly convinces him and even makes him hopeful of the future of the struggle.

There is no clear account of this conversation in history. All we know is that Hojr comes away reassured. Hojr is not a credulous person nor is he somebody to accept a conservative approach involving compromise or the logic of dissumulation, passive endurance or a non-dangerous approach to struggle. Nor is he such an idolizer of leadership that he simply accepts Imam Hasan's opinion without question.

Taha Hosein [the famous Egyption writer] writes about this meeting of Hojr and Imam Hasan as well as another encounter with Soleiman ibn Sorad-i-Khaza'i and the Imam. As he states, Soleiman is also very critical of a kind and peaceful compromise, yet like Hojr, comes away satisfied with Imam Hasan's reasoning. Taha Hosein says that Imam Hasan's argument must have run like this: Any kind of open military struggle such as mounting an army in the field would serve no purpose except to annihilate whatever forces they had left. He had talked about establishing the foundation for a secret organization effectively continuing the struggle underground. The resistance movement or revolutionary operation against the regime took shape. It is this organization which during the two Caliphates of the Omayyids and the Abbasids up to the last Shi'ite Imam ( ع ) formed networks which expanded throughout the lands of Islam, providing the basis for the Shi'ite Resistance Movement.

Hojr, and his companions, who are zealous young men, like Ali ibn Hatam, can not tolerate an age of suppression and black dictatorship of ever-increasing oppression, autocracy, exploitation of the people and their rights and the dispersion of the human aims of the Islamic Movement. They insist on defying this perverted rule over

the people which is growing stronger day by day at the expense of right, justice and Islam.

The struggles, under the leadership of Hojr, increased and became ever more vigorous until the Omayyids, through a nefarious plot, issued a decree against Hojr condemning him as an atheist (and this coming from the likes of the Omayyids!). Then these young paragons of resistance of the second generation of the movement are seized and executed in Syria for their revolt against the establishment of Damascus, these disciples of the school and way of Ali who loyally persevered in their resistance.

Now Hosein appears but the central base of the power of the Revolution has been lost. The companions of the Resistance struggle have either been killed off or silenced. The faithful Companions who had not sold themselves, sought the security of devotion in out-of-the-way corners rather than be bothered with the battling for that which is right and the risks involved in social and political struggle, to liberate the people and free them from their oppressive lot. They have slipped into the shell of respectability, piousness, self-centeredness and remaining silent. A group of the most notable Companions of the Prophet, have been passing their time in the Green Palace of Mo'awiyyah helping themselves to the public treasury while the second generation had been defeated in their striving and struggling against the Omayyids. The power of the tyrant, enforced with sword or with money or with position or with deception, brings a pall of stifled silence upon everyone.

The mechanism of neo-mystification goes into operation along with the pressure of fear, money and

fraud and the freedom of license and corruption along with the repression of ideas and faith and a sense of responsibility – we might say 'the freedom of repression' and 'the repression of freedom'. In this way the regime brings about a decay of the moral fiber of society. They bombard and obliterate the real fundamentals, the truth of faith, the Revolution, the bases of the movement and Islam. They paralyze hearts and minds by making sly appeals to quietism.

The regime of neo-ignorance knows well that the danger of revolution will not come about by destroying the House of Mohammad or murdering Ali or defeating the army of Hasan or the secret and unmanly destruction of Hasan himself. It knows that the uprooting of every base of resistance or the scattering of all uncertain forces, the ruthless massacre of the fiery figures of the revolt of the younger generation in Kufa such as Hojr; the exile, murder or condemnation to poverty and cutting off from the rights for which the Companions such as Abuzar, struggled through the glorious power of faith, is pointless. It senses that the breadth, the fine sensitivity of awareness, the keen edge of faith in the Truth, the profound understanding of the spirit of Islam, the true knowledge of the path of the call, the real meaning of the mission of the Prophet could not be repressed by the brute force, aggression, underhandedness and the travesty of justice which the Omayyid establishment stood for. Even the killing of brave souls like Abdollah ibn Masoud, who stood up in protest against injustice and was tortured, is useless along with the leveling of every barricade in the fight for justice, the eradication of every potential of resistance against the system of the ruler, and, altogether, the martyring of

the true leaders of the Movement and the forcing aside of the deserving participants in the struggle. They take the most important men into their service and the greatest talents, crushing all of the strivings, winning on all the fronts and establishing total hegemony of the Omayyid Monarchy in all the lands of Islam extending from Syria to Khorassan. With all this, there is no way of rooting out the Resistance. However much they want to guarantee the stability of their regime and allow them to rule with a free hand, the fact is that all of these efforts – conquest, gaining domination, seizing the reins of leadership, smashing the people's liberation front, scattering and crushing all the defenders of faith, lovers of freedom, seekers of rights, disarming justice and finally, inheriting the arms, shields, armour and steeds of Islam and bringing people under the lashes of their dominance - all these efforts come to nothing.

The intelligent, aware, politicians of the Omayyids know themselves well. They know their people and the spirit of the times. This society is only one generation away from the birth of the great intellectual, social, political, spiritual Revolution which is Islam. From one point of view this regime is one generation away from ignorance and polytheism and the battles of Badr, Ohod and Khandaq, the age of all these leaders of the atheistic, idolatrous, slave-dealing and capitalistic faction who fought the Prophet.

The Omayyids know that under the black ashes of defeat smolders the red threat of a potential explosion. The army may have been defeated but Islam is still very much alive. The party of faith has been dispersed but faith itself is very much alive. The leaders of justice and

supporters of Truth, the arms and shields of freedom and humanity all have been destroyed. The barricade of liberty has been razed and the base of resistance has been destroyed.

But what about the cause of justice, the worship of the Truth, the taste for freedom and the love of humanity? Ali is slain at prayer but what of the fire of Ali? Abuzar is exiled, then silenced by death at Rabazah, but what about the rallying cry of Abuzar? Hojr is executed in Syria, yet what of the rebellion of Hojr?

The true heart of these dangers, the well-spring of these revolts is not in Medina where people are massacred, nor at the Ka'ba where people are stoned, nor at Kufa which is controlled by a coup d'etat, nor at the Mosque of the Prophet where people are trampled under the feet of horses and chopped down by their riders, nor even in the house of the Prophet which lies in ruins, nor in the house of Fatima which is now ashes, nor in the Qoran which they pierce with spears. . . Then where, indeed, is the heart of the fire, where is the constant well-spring of danger?

It is in the hearts and minds! If these two sources are not destroyed, all the victories remain without effect and all forces are endangered. If these two remain alive, all the people like Abuzar, Hojr, Omar and Malek, will also remain alive in their martyrdom and will send new people to the battlefield. All the Alis will reach martyrdom before death and will die in life. But if the fire of his school of thought is not destroyed, no immunity, either black or red — can be maintained by mass executioners. They will not remain immune for a moment in the sea of blood and the cemetery of death.

The mission of divine Revolution is not in the Qoran, it is here. Although Ali is murdered in the Kufa Mosque, he still exists. All of those who are killed, all of the places which are conquered, all of the fronts which are defeated, all of the arms and fortresses which are taken and occupied belonged to truth, freedom and justice. The struggle for securing truth, freedom (liberty) and justice still exist and they are busy working on these two main principles. Therefore, these two centers should be destroyed. If these two fire-giving, luminous powers and the movement-creating centers are destroyed, this can remain and make a nest.

Attacks begin. Arms are gathered to destroy the two sources of danger, the two real sources of explosion and fire — hearts and minds.

But this battle needs another type of arms, shields, bows and arrows and another type of army, policy, design, plan, rulers and conquerors. In the leading of this army and attack, neither gold is effective nor the giving of rights to Rey or Iraq to rule nor tricks nor the genius of Amr nor the works and murders of Barnar ibn Artat, Yazid ibn Mohlab and Hadjadj ibn Yusef.

In this surprise attack, the Qoran is the arms, the customs of the Prophet *(sunnah)* are the shields. Thought and science are the equipment, faith is the fortification, Islam is the flag and the army consists of commentators, exploiters, lecturers, religious theologians, scholars, judges and the leader. The leaders are the great Companions of the Prophet, the important clergymen and the great Moftis.

The attack begins. The army of religion progresses smoothly and successfully in the land where a worldly,

earthly army had already progressed and had eliminated any obstacles and resistance. Thus, they enter, develope and progress in the two main centers of fire, gradually conquer them, and without any noticeable resistance, they ruin them from the inside with a terrible compound. They use an elixir, the making of which formal clergymen of all religions know well. They transfer its recipe to each other throughout history. It is this same inauspicious elixir from which Moses is given the power to destroy the Pharaoh, Qaroon and made the Jews, who are more murderous than the Pharaoh, greater worshippers of wealth than Qaroon and more deceitful than Balaam and from the lover and founder of peace, Jesus Christ, it made a Caesar with satanic actions and disdain for religion.

The intellectual is sold and the clergy relate to the powerful. In Islam the subject begins which changes the fate of everything. All of the values are annihilated. They kill the spirit, change the direction of the Islamic Revolution and finally, sacrifice the people in the name of religion.

It is the first time that Islam, with the assistance of religious scholars, testifies to the elements and actions of the regime. The religious authorities compulsively believe that everything should be related to God. Two horrible cancers fall upon the people - "in the Name of God" and "the religion of God".

The first one is the cancer of the religious authorities. They are the pseudo-Islamic scholars and clergymen. They are the speakers of Islam, religious scholars and leaders of the community. They have no official position or situation. They are not murderers. They study in the

corners of schools, learn, and teach. Who are the religious authorities *(marjaie)*? What does religious authority mean?

Their thesis is that anyone, sinful or pure, anyone who has done a wrong, a deceitful thing, created a conspiracy or committed a crime must have hope for the mercy and forgiveness of God. He must have hope because God has said, "There are people who are hopeful to God's command." It is having hope that allows God's forgiveness, mercy and compassion. God forgives and there is the hope that he will forgive any crime. Therefore, it is forbidden for any normal man who may himself be sinful to call such criminals bad names. You cannot call them bad names and fight against them.

On the other hand, when you call a criminal, an oppressor and conspirator and condemn him and on the other hand, call someone oppressed, or slave, it is as if you claim to be God because God is the chief commander and it is on this basis that God takes everyone's actions into account and judges the procedure and behavior of anyone who is against the balance of justice. So, you do not have the right to judge the oppressor and conspirator. You want to establish the balance of the scales of justice here. Are you God? Do you want to accuse people and clear their accounts before God does so? No. It is not our duty to judge between a conspirator and a server. We are not allowed to condemn the criminal. We are not permitted to stand against this or that group. We should accept all of them. We must be patient and leave the punishment of everyone to God. It is the problem which arises from religious authorities in that they say, "Leave everything to God."

This disease of hope or cancer of the religious authorities paralyzes the second generation of Islam, who have not had sufficient training in the school of Islam and who have not received the language of the Qoran and Islam from the tongue of the Prophet, Ali, the Emigrants and the Helpers. Thus, they are obliged to receive their Islamic teachings second-hand from those who have sold their thoughts and ideas. It is for this reason that their awareness, findings and religious spirits are permanently poisoned with the propaganda of the religious authorities who are backed by the ruling regime. It is the strict, responsible fundamentalist Moslems, sensing their responsibility every moment 'to enjoin the good and forbid the bad' *(amr bi marouf va nahi as monkir)*, thick-headed people who extend themselves by imbibing in both God and the devil who existed side by side, one having nothing to do with the other one.

The second cancer is the cancer of fatalism which also grows in this period. The first religious school of thought which is created during the time of the Omayyids is the school of the religious authorities. They use the Qoran as a means to paralyze and destroy all ideas and beliefs, much less jihad. The other one is the school of fatalism which is the first school of philosophy that comes into being during the Omayyid times as a divine philosophy.

We are going to see what corruption is hidden behind saintly and sacred faces. Divine Fate means, as the Qoran tells us, "God is the Absolute Commander". They extend this to mean that whatever suffering occurs in the universe is according to His wishes. Whatever one does is done according to the wishes of God. Whatever position one has,

in whatever situation one be in, whatever choice one makes, in whatever action one takes – whether corrupt or pure, murderer or non-murderer, executed or executioner, reactions to God's Will and Determinism. Whether one is a slave or a master, are all ruled or ruler belong to God. It is God that gives power and takes it away. It is God that kills and brings into being. It is God that gives honor or abasement. No one has any right whatsoever.

The correctness or attractiveness of this explanation of fatalism had a powerful effect upon the faithful Moslems who took the Qoranic words into consideration together with the Traditions of the Prophet - Traditions automatically produced by people like Abu Horareh in 'Tradition-making-machines' until they reached 40,000 different Traditions in the name of the Prophet. The Prophet would have had to have lived 1000 years to have said all of them.

These teachings of the scholars have a paralyzing effect upon the thoughts of Moslems who live in obeyance of God's Will. It is explained to them that the Omayyids ruled because God gave them this power. If Ali is defeated it is because God willed him to be defeated. Whether or not one is bad or good, if the good are destroyed and the bad, rule, it is all based on a higher wisdom that is not clear to us but depends upon God's Will. It is out of our hands. Therefore, any rudeness, crime or plunder of any position or person is considered to be a protest and criticism of God's Will, Power and Determination.

Sixty years have passed since the migration of the Prophet. Everything earned by the Revolution has been destroyed. All of the successes earned half a century

before have been abolished. The Book brought by the Prophet is placed on the spears of the Bani Omayyid. The culture and ideas which Islam had developed through jihad, struggles and efforts in the hearts and thoughts of the people became a means for explaining the Omayyid's rule. All of the mosques are turned into support systems for polytheism, oppression, deceit and making fools out of the people. All of the swords of the mojahids are put to use for the executioners. All of the income from *zakat* and other religious taxes is used to run the Green Palace of Mo'awiyyah. All of the words relating to reality, unity, the Prophet, the *sunnah*, the Qoran and Revelation are in the possession of Mo'awiyyah and his regime. All of the leaders of the community, judges, interpreters of the Qoran, reciters of the Qoran, scholars and speakers at the mosques have either been killed or pray in silence in the corners of the mosques or are propagators for the regime in Damascus (i.e. the Bani Omayyid).

The foundations of Mohammad no longer have a spokesman nor an altar nor a pulpit. Throughout the whole of this wide territory which included Rome, Iran and the Arabs, no one remains who relates to the Prophet's family or who was of the generation of those faithful to the Revolution. The results of all of the sufferings of the Emigrants and the Companions went with the wind. The palace of Mo'awiyyah gained a treasure, easily earned.

The revolutionaries of the past have either died in the remote desert of Rabazeh or have been killed in the fields of Marjal-Azar. The second generation of the Revolution who have created a movement and fought a struggle are

mass-executed. The others are either engaged in a pessimistic philosophy of fatalism or surrender to the side of the religious leaders. They realize that any effort to change the present situation is useless. Through experience they have learned that any struggle to guard Islam and to establish truth and justice and any fight against the ever-increasing neo-ignorance, had been defeated.

So, now, sixty years after the migration, all of the powers are in the possession of the oppressive ruler. The values are determined solely by the ruling regime. Ideas and thoughts are developed by idea-making and thought-making agents. Brains are washed, filled and poisoned with material presented in the name of religion. Faiths are altered, bought, paralyzed. If none of these efforts prove successful, faith is cut off with the sword. Now, Hosein has come up against this power, the power which possesses the thoughts, religion, Qoran, wealth, sword, propagation, public arms and heredity of the Prophet. Hosein appears with empty hands. He has nothing. What can he do? Can he become an ascetic and run away to a corner to worship? Should he keep quiet rationalizing that since he is the grandson of the Prophet, the son of Ali and Fatima, therefore Paradise has been guaranteed to him?

This argument does not hold with him. The other believers believe it but he is responsible, committed. Can he change his responsibility to perform the jihad into reaching nearness to God through reading and reciting prayers which is certainly easier? He cannot choose this solution because it is just 60 years after the migration and no prayer books have as yet been printed.

He has two ways open to him – either to say "No.

I cannot start a political fight against the Omayyid tribe because a combat like that needs an army and I have no power so I have to just sit down and perform an intellectual, a mental jihad." But Imam Hosein cannot choose this solution.

If we see that later on, Imam Ja'far Sadeq, the sixth Imam, in the ninth generation after the Prophet (742 - 752 A.D.), establishes an intellectual school, it is because of two facts. During the last days of the Omayyid government and early stages of the Abbascid Caliphate, on the one hand, Greek philosophy enters the thoughts of Moslems and on the other hand, Indian and Iranian Sufism as well as Christianity have become very dear to the hearts of Moslems.

Because of these, the Moslem intellectuals at the time of the Abbascids intend to become sensible about politics. They begin thinking about right and wrong, truth and falsehood. They begin to wonder why Ali went and Mo'awiyyah came. They began to wonder who should rule the community and who should not. They are concerned with the "Seven Cities of Love". They are occupied with the relationship of the first chaos to the other chaos' which came about seemingly by themselves. They are concerned with the identity of the original or basic material from which God had created the world. It is these philosophical questions of the Qoran which concerned them or the discovery of some particular gnostic questions in the Qoran. But even if they have succeeded in answering these, their answers are not worth a penny.

Gradually questions concerning the soul, the body, chaos, essence, attribution, love, the first era, the last era, ecstasy, embezzlement, etc., develop among them

but the problems of responsibility, committment to society, the community, justice, equality, leadership, etc., have been entirely forgotten.

The regime has begun to create its own schools of thought and supplies them with theologians, rationalizations, philosophies and ideologies so that the roots of Islam can be changed and the regime can then justify its competence.

In such a situation, an intellectual struggle is obligatory especially for a person like Imam Sadiq who has no possibility of engaging in a political struggle, who has said, "If I only had seven faithful soldiers, I would rebel."

But in the time of Imam Hosein, the situation is different. Sixty years after the migration there is still no sign of Western philosophy. The sciences which convert the reality and truth of Islam have not as yet entered into it. Islam still has its original roots, its memories and the people still have a clear recollection of it.

Mo'awiyyah wants Imam Hosein to sit in the Damascus mosque and teach theology, explain the verses of the Qoran, Islamic culture, monotheism, the history of Islam or the customs and behavior of the Prophet or anything else that he wishes. He is even prepared to provide a budget for him providing that Imam Hosein does not engage in political activity which Mo'awiyyah considers to be an inferior activity for an Imam! But the Imam knows that 'the value of any action in society is equal to how much it hurts the enemy!' What must he do? He must rebel. Armed Revolution? An armed Revolution needs power and Imam Hosein has no power.

A book has recently been published which has become very popular - and has been very much attacked.

Its contents inadvertently show it to be a worthwhile book. I noted in studying it that it is the only book among the books written by our scholars which is written based upon studies by the author himself. All the documents have been gathered and both views, pro and con, have been presented, analyzed, explained and criticized. The author has even shown great courage by not rejecting or approving them. In other words, he undertakes an extensive study with a wide-range of references to perform scientific research in order to be able to announce a new scientific theory. These are the values of this book and I admire the author although I do not know him personally. I respect him as a scientist who has undertaken serious research, explanation and analysis, as an independent thinker in which he announces a new thesis: "Imam Hosein left Medina in order to undertake a political or military revolt against the ruling government and regime by destroying an oppressive regime to obtain his own rights and the rights of the people."

I am not in agreement with this theory, although it is an ideal one, but it does not comply with the particular realities of the situation. One person, in rejecting this theory, said, "Imam Hosein was not a politician in order to be able to revolt against the ruling power."

It is surprising! For what purpose then, were the Prophet and Ali fighting? For what purpose was Imam Hosein fighting? Is it not the question of politics? Is it not the fact that criminals are ruling over the people? Therefore, a person who is responsible should abolish the oppression and by taking possession of the rulership, give the people their rights. It is not only the right of the leader to do so, but it is his obligation.

Therefore, certainly the Imam must militarily or politically arise against the usurping government and destroy the powerful ignorance, govern through their revolutionary power and establish the truth in the community and keep the leadership in his own possession. I would like to say that this military or political revolution is the very mission of Imam Hosein but that he, in actuality, does not possess the ability.

Those that believe that Imam Hosein undertook a political and military revolt, use the argument that Kufa was a center which supported and protected Imam Hosein, his family and the family of the Prophet and Ali. It is correct that Iran is behind Kufa and that the Iranians supported Ali and his family and that they even believe that all of Kufa is in the possession of Imam Hosein and that the people of Kufa were faithful and loyal to Imam Hosein's agent, Muslim ibn Aqil.

I assume that if Kufa is so powerful, in the case that Imam Hosein is able to reach there, he could have transformed it into a strong Islamic foundation and could even defeat Damascus and establish a free Islamic government under his leadership. Nevertheless, I believe that the movement of Imam Hosein had not been a political and military one.

Let me add - not for the reason that, as some people say, it is a defect for Imam Hosein to attend to politics and undertake a political revolution. No. This is the duty of an Imam. What I say is that he did not have the possibilities available to him to make such a Revolution.

You may argue: How is it possible that if Imam Hosein had reached Kufa, you yourself admit that Kufa had the possibility of defeating Damascus and thereby

giving the leadership of the government to Imam Hosein? Therefore, why is it that you do not believe the revolt of Imam Hosein to have been a political and military Revolution against the Omayyid regime? In order to clear up this point, we should look at the start and form of the Imam's movement from Medina.

Imam Hosein leaves Medina and goes to Mecca. In Medina, he receives the invitation of the people of Kufa, "We believe in you and expect you to accept the leadership. We need your leadership. We will give power to you. We will stand with you against usurpation and oppression. We will defend you. Please release us from this exploitive government."

In Medina, Imam Hosein announces: "Following in the traditions of my grandfather and my father, I am leaving Medina to 'invite people to the good and to forbid evil.' " Then he travels the 600 kilometers and arrives openly in Mecca, accompanied by his family.

In Mecca, he announces to the pilgrims who had come for the annual pilgrimage, "I am going to my death." A person who is planning a political rebellion does not speak in these terms. He would say, "I am going to fight to kill. I will conquer. I will destroy the enemy."

But Imam Hosein addresses the people, saying, "Death, for the sons of Adam, is as beautiful as a necklace around the neck of a young and beautiful girl. Death is an ornament for mankind." Then he leaves Mecca to go towards death.

Is it possible that a politician, who is living in the center of the power of the Omayyid tribe and is surrounded by a district of the ruling government, in reply to an invitation sent to him from one of the remote cities

which had rebelled against the central government, to go to them to accept their revolutionary leadership and then formally announce, "I am coming," takes his wife, children and all the members of his family, his nephews and all the men and women of his family in an open caravan — not secretly — moves very naturally from one town to another all of which are occupied by the enemy who are supporters of the central government? He crosses six hundred kilometers in this manner, and enters Mecca. There, all those who are ruled by the Damascus government, all of the powers, fronts and Islamic nationalists are gathered. Here he announces once more that he intends to go to Kufa. He leaves by the western side of the Arabian peninsula and passing the whole eastern-western diameter, in the same manner, goes to Iraq and arrives near Kufa, the center of rebellion and revolution. It is obvious that the central government would not permit such a movement.

If a well-known political personality or even an ordinary opposing politician intends to leave a country to join the revolutionaries who are out of the country, to participate in their activities against the regime, it is clear under what conditions and in what manner he should leave the country and approach them.

Certainly, he should not announce it. He should not make the invitation known. He should keep his goal and his journey quite secret so that no one knows about it. It is obvious that if he formally announces to the government, "I am a revolutionary who opposes the regime. I will not give my allegiance to the regime. I intend to leave the country in order to join the revolutionary group outside of the country and fight with them against

the present regime. The revolutionaries have asked me to become their leader. Because of this, I am leaving the country. Please issue my passport!", they will not issue him a passport, but will seize and destroy him. But what does Imam Hosein do?

He formally, clearly and distinctly announces to the government, to the ruling power, to the military governor, to the people, "I do not give my allegiance. I am leaving Mecca. I am migrating to Kufa. I am migrating to death. I begin to move."

If the people suddenly realized that Imam Hosein had left the city, if Imam Hosein had left the city secretly, if he had quietly migrated and through the help of the tribes, reached Kufa in the same way that the Prophet migrated from Mecca to Medina, after a time, the central government would realize that he was in Kufa and among the revolutionaries. It would then be obvious that Imam Hosein had rebelled against the government.

But the form of his movement, his moving with the caravan shows that Imam Hosein has moved for another purpose. His purpose is neither to run nor to seek seclusion. He is neither surrendering nor putting aside politics and a political rebellion for intellectual, scientific, theological and moral affairs, nor for a military revolution. Then what?

It had reached the point where thoughts had become paralyzed. Personalities had sold out. The faithful have been left alone. Virtues have been isolated. Young people are either in a state of hopelessness or they have sold themselves out. The important pioneers of Islam have either been martyred or silenced and choked or made to sell out. It is a time when no sounds are heard from the

community. Pens have been broken. Tongues have been cut off. Lips have been sealed shut. All of the pillars of truth have been knocked down, and have fallen on top of the faithful followers.

Imam Hosein, as a responsible leader, sees that if he remains silent, Islam will change into a religion of the government. Islam will be changed into a military-economic power and nothing more. Islam will become as other regimes and powers. When their power diminishes, when their army and government are destroyed, nothing will remain. It will be nothing more than a memory in history — an accident which occurred in the past and has ended.

It is for this reason that Imam Hosein now stands between two inabilities. He can neither remain silent nor can he fight. He cannot remain silent because time and the right opportunity are passing. Everything is being destroyed, abolished in the minds and deep consciences of the people — feelings, thoughts, schools of thought, goals, targets, meanings, ideals — everything brought by the message of Mohammad, all of the Islam that he brought and developed through jihad, great efforts and struggles. All of the others are obeying the ruling power. They are being deceived. Their present atmosphere is one of complete silence, palpitations and surrender. He cannot remain silent because he has a duty to fight against oppression.

On the other hand, he cannot fight because he has no army. He is surrounded by the ruling, oppressive regime. He can neither shout out nor surrender nor attack. He remains with empty hands, yet the heavy burden of all of these responsibilities rests on his shoulders. He

receives nothing from the power and the results of the struggles and efforts of his grandfather, the Prophet, his father, Hazrat Ali, and his brother, Imam Hasan, except an honor, a misery and a very heavy responsibility.

He is alone, unarmed. Opposing him is one of the most savage empires of the world which is being covered over by the fairest and most deceiving cover of piety, sacredness and unity which the ruling power possesses. He is alone. He is a lonely man who is responsible to this school of thought. In this school of thought, the lonely man is also responsible to oppose the determining power of fate because responsibility appears from awareness and faith, not from power and possibility. Whoever is more aware, is more responsible, and who is more aware than Imam Hosein?

What is his responsibility? He is responsible to fight against the elimination of truth, the destruction of the rights of the people, annihilation of all of the values, abolition of all of the memories of the Revolution, destruction of the message of the Revolution, and protect the most beloved of cultures and the faith of the people, for their destruction is the aim of the most filthy enemies of the people. They want to once again create the unknown, mysterious deaths, exiles, putting people in chains, the worshipping of pleasure, discriminations, the gathering of wealth, the selling of human values, faith, honor, creating new religious foolishnesses, racism, new aristocracy, new ignorance and a new polytheism.

The responsibility of resisting, struggling and fighting against all of these treacheries to the thoughts and crimes of the people, strikes against the people and jihads which are performed against the new conservatism and guarding

that great, divine Revolution, are all placed upon the shoulders of one man. Alone! No one else has remained in the ranks of truth, justice, awareness, the people and God. All fronts have been released. All of the defenders have either been killed or have run away. He has remained alone, empty handed, without any possibility, surrounded by the enemy who caused others to surrender to the silence, to become indifferent and fall into public ignorance.

He can neither keep silent nor can he cry out. He cannot remain silent because all of the responsibilities are awaiting the actions of this lonely man. He cannot cry out because the sound of his voice has been curtailed. His cry will not reach the terrible silence of the sacrificing people; it will not reach the threat of immunity, the negligence of ignorance, the stupefication of the ruling religion, it cannot effect the brawls, false and savage wars of the Caliphate which are performed in the name of jihad, victory, profit, slogans, assemblies, the pilgrimage, the Qoran and Islam. In the meantime, dance, music and art progress; power, pleasure and corrupt liberties are announced in the name of the Caliphate.

He must fight, but he cannot. How strange. He must and yet is unable. This responsibility burdens his awareness. It results from 'being Hosein' not from his 'ability'. He is still Hosein - alone, unable, unarmed and helpless.

What should he do? 'Being Hosein' calls him to fight but he has no arms to fight with and yet he still has the duty to fight. All of the supporters of wisdom and religion, advisors of tradition and common law, recommenders towards goodness and logic, all, unanimously say, "No!" But Hosein says, "Yes."

He leaves Medina for this purpose. He has come to Mecca to announce his unique answer to all Moslems who have gathered there for the pilgrimage ceremonies. He leaves Mecca to reply to the question, "How?" The question existed in that important moment of history in which the fate of the people and Islam were changing and being determined. At the moment, all things have fallen down. All of the intellectuals and aware people and those who are faithful to the truth, justice, freedom of Islam and revolution, all those who could see, feel, understand and thus suffered and felt themselves responsible, who are thus looking for a revolution, are then asking, "What should be done?"

Everyone has an answer.

The fatalists say, "Nothing." Whatever has occurred will continue to occur in accordance with divine wisdom and divine profundity. God wishes it to be this way. You must be satisfied with what has been given to you and be grateful for it, because you are not allowed to freely decide your fate.

As they say, it is true that oppression crime, usurpation, rights, claims of jihad, *zakat* (religious taxes), Traditions of the Prophet, the victory of Islam, turning the fire temples and homes of idols into mosques for the Propagation of the Qoran to increase the number of Moslems, exist. All these are false and deceptive.

But what can be done? A leaf does not fall from a tree unless God so wills. God has so wished. This is how His wisdom rules. No one can protest, criticize or even say why it is so. Everyone is run by his or her fate. Anything that occurs, good or bad, is according to the eternal fate and is recorded in the Qoran. If Ali is defeated and

remains alone, if Mo'awiyyah conquers and attains power, these are all in accordance with God's wishes. The Qoran says: "God causes whomever He wishes to arise." "God brings down whomever He wishes." "God gives power to whomever He wishes." Thus, what can one say? What can one do? One can only be patient and remain silent. Other than remaining content and surrendering, what can a person who is bound in the chains of fate and destiny do? Nothing.[2]

We see that with such a philosophy, the question of ability, inability or jihad, are not even important. They release any sense of responsibility because there is no way to choose the right way. The religious leaders reply, "What must we do? Against whom? In opposition to whom? God asks all of the people to hope and to seek salvation and paradise. How can we condemn a person and say that he will go to hell and then fight him? It is as if you performed a godless act by arising before the day of doom and condemning prior to the day of justice.

"What will happen if this condemned person, this criminal Mo'awiyyah is forgiven by God on the day of doom? Do not forgive him nor call for his punishment so that if tomorrow God should bless him, what will your reply be? What will your duty be? What should be done? Whom should you ask? Who must reply? Who must act? No one. Nothing. We must wait and see what God does."

The religious leaders also argue, on the other hand, that Abu Bakr, Omar, Othman, Ali, Talha, Zobayr, Mo'awiyyah and Yazid were all Companions of the Prophet. They were all mojaheds. Each of them acted according to his own findings and religious discernment. There is

no discrepancy between the sacred and the profane, the oppressor and the oppressed, friend and enemy. Experts are not obliged to consider the views of the public. Ordinary people should not interfere with religious experts and theologians. God is the final Judge. God is most Merciful. You and I are not allowed to ask why.

The strict religious group, the fundamentalists, reply: "There are as many ways to God as there are people. Is jihad the only answer? The ritual prayer is one of the pillars of the religion while jihad is one of the branches related to encouraging good deeds and prohibiting evil deeds. Do you, yourself perform and follow all of the formalities, performances, rules, commandments, duties, conditions which relate to the daily ritual prayer? Do you remember all of the regulations regarding doubts in the ritual prayers which are like complicated logarithmic tables? Have you learned the rules of the pure and the impure? The important and obligatory rules of the prayer?

"Have those of you who are thinking about the people and who are intending to guide and direct them, rectified yourself? Have you reached the position of never stumbling over an error? - not being selfish, not having any desires? - being released from the whole body of wishes? - being completely pure and innocent? Are all of your thoughts and deeds, even the slightest ones, for the sake of the satisfaction of God? Only and purely for God? Have you corrected all of the principles and the various branches of your religion? Have you been purified, and received piety? Do you now consider yourself as innocent and rectified so that you are now trying to rectify the community?

"On the other hand, paradise has eight doors. You are not obliged to enter only through the door of jihad. Jihad is simply one of the keys which opens the doors to Paradise. Prayers, other forms of worship, and incantations are safer keys and you can use them without any harm, loss, danger or risk!

"There are a lot of charitable affairs that will take you to the same point such as feeding the needy, looking after poor families, visiting holy places, praying, asceticism, piety, making vows, dedication, helping your neighbor, incantations, prayer ceremonies, lamentation and intercession. You will reach the same goal as the person who chooses jihad so why cause yourself suffering and pain by choosing the much more difficult action of jihad?

"It has been mentioned in some of the prayer books that by simply reading some of the prayers in that book, the person is given more rewards and benefits than seventy martyrs at the Battle of Badr! So is it not clear what should be done?"

Another group believes that the entrance of a holy personality or a religious clergyman into political affairs is a deviation from true religion. It means selling religion to the materialists and instead of attending to ethics and religious affairs, it means to seek after wealth and the gathering of earthly things. These cannot be mixed with each other.

"Did the Prophet not say, returning from a holy war, 'We are now returning from the lesser jihad but we are confronted by a greater jihad.' They asked him, what the greater kind of jihad was. He answered, 'The jihad against carnal desires!' Therefore, one must put aside the lesser jihad and only attend to the greater one. One

should confront one's carnal desires, not an external enemy."

The Companions, outstanding personalities, theologians and religious scholars, dependent upon the regime, declare, "Ali's type of thinking is not practical and contains too much hardship. It is too strict. One must consider realities. One must be a realist, not an idealist. Ali ruled over the greater part of the known world, but he still mends his own shoes himself! He works like a common laborer. Today people judge by what they see. This is particularly true since Iran and Rome have been defeated and Moslems have seen the glory and magnificence of the huge, fantastic palaces and the greatness and majesty of the King of Kings of Iran and the Caesars of Rome. No, this kind of living is not acceptable! It is not good for the reputation and prestige of an Islamic Government.

"On the other hand, can Ali's regime be tolerated in the aristocratic societies of Iran and Rome? When Ali was appointed Caliph, he changed all of the wage scales of the salaries, making everyone equal. He gave the same salary of 3 dirhams to Othman ibn Hanif, the great and important politician and close friend and outstanding officer in Ali's government, as he gave to a slave!"

According to this idea, this economic system is impractical. They argue, "We saw and still remember that in Iran, which is now occupied by the Arabs and is part of the Islamic Empire ruled by Ali, when Khosroes was coming to fight the Moslems - realizing that according to conditions for war, he should leave aside as many ceremonies as is possible - he had seven thousand women, slaves, servants and musicians with him!"

They say, "We do not want to argue as to whether or not this was right. We are saying that if Ali failed, it was because his school of thought was not practical. He could not adapt himself to the current situation and social realities. He was not a politician! He was not a sociologist! He offended everyone. He was too strict. He never humbled himself before the outstanding personalities, the heads of the tribes, the powerful, the aristocrats or the noble families."

They say, "You must not compare the Caliphate with the Imamate and Prophecy! You must not compare Mo'awiyyah and Yazid with the Prophet and Ali! You should compare them to the Caesars and Kings. The present court of Damascus which you have announced to be a Green Palace, in which public funds have been invested and the rights of people have been destroyed there – is the place from which the Islamic Empire of the world rules over Iran, Rome, etc. but it is still more humble than the palace of a Roman Council or an officer who was appointed as the governor of Syria."

Abuzar attacks Mo'awiyyah with these words, "Why is your bread made of bleached wheat and you only eat the center of the wheat? Why do you wear a different dress during the day and another at night?"

The followers of Ali believe that we are still living in Medina as it was at the time of the Prophet and that the 'civilized' Romans and Iranians who have joined the Islamic world are Emigrants and Helpers!

They argue, "We should consider the relativity of the issues. Correct worship and absolutism are idealistic. You must see the realities. It is not possible to convince the poor, backward Moslems who are ruling an important

part of the world that having two empires – East and West – one should live like they did at the time of the Prophet or behave as Ali is behaving. Standards of living have progressed.

The traditions, rules, etiquette of society, economic and aristocratic systems, thoughts, ideas, tastes, literature, poetry, music, dance, amusements, social relations, ethics and manners of 'civilized' Rome and Iran, the social class system and aristocratic regime, the political system of the Caesars and Kings, the type and form of monastic and clerical traditions and proprieties which are hierarchial, bureaucrat, official and classical system of rule, and finally, the progressive Irarian and Roman civilizations certainly had an influence upon the simple Islamic communities.

The wealth, power, position and countless 'spoils' which had been earned in the Moslem victories make the people grow fat and it is because of this that they are no longer listening to Ali's advice, his goal and his sufferings. The majority of the people are quite happy with the situation. They are no longer fond of such problems. They show no sensitivity whatsoever to them. These people have now changed into being the servants of wealth and power. Those few who did not obey had been tried by the sword!

Do you remember what happened to Ali and Fatima in their own town of Medina, in their own time, at the hands of their own friends and companions, and those who fought in the same rank as they did?

You saw that the Omayyid tribe had not been present in either Medina or Saqifah. None of them had been part of the election committee *(shura)*. Do you recall the

outstanding officers of Hazrat Ali and Imam Hasan with glorious backgrounds? And, how they sold themselves to Mo'awiyyah at the peak of the battle? How they dealt a good hand to themselves, their religion, their past self-respect and all of the soldiers under their command with Mo'awiyyah?

The Khavarej had been neither from the Omayyid tribe nor had they been related to the Omayyid regime. They had even been the blood enemies of the Omayyids and their regime. They had all come from the mass of the people, ordinary tradesmen from the countryside. They had even been symbols of the sacred, pious devotees who underwent ascetic practices. They had been outstanding and well-known examples of the strict religious types. You noted how they unconsciously had become tools in the hands of the Omayyids. They had been indirectly agitated from Damascus and thus had opposed Ali. In the crisis of the battle, they had argued with Ali and had left him alone. So they become unpaid servants of the enemy who are used to defeat Ali. They are good, religious people who weakened Ali by accusing, insulting and even excommunicating and debauching him.

Those nominous people like Amr Aas, who had been well-known among the people, could not hurt Ali's spiritual and religious reputation so they try to destroy him through excommunication. We saw how they finally manage to kill him with their motives and fanaticism. Through these experiences, one may think the answer to, "What should be done?" is "Nothing." Mo'awiyyah suits these people, not Ali. On the other hand, Mo'awiyyah, taking all of his weak points and deviations into consideration, is much more of a modern thinker and

more realistic than Ali. Ali intends to have the people live with piety and simplicity which is impossible. But Mo'awiyyah's regime, even though it is oppressive, corrupt and discriminating, rapidly develops the community. With its free and careless spirit, it easily imitates all of the forms and types of Iranian and Roman civilizations. During the twenty years which he had held power, after the settling of internal difficulties and discrepancies and obvious personalities like Abuzar, Ali, Hasan, Hojr, etc., he turns the capital of Islam into a modern and progressive, western-like town. He establishes an armed marine force in the Mediterranean, occupies Cyprus and holds permanent attacks against the king of the Eastern Roman Empire.

In the construction of the Green Palace of Mo'awiyyah, a Roman style of architecture is followed and it is decorated in a Sassanian style. Instead of a few bedouin Arab slaves, he manages an orchestra full of the best Iranian musicians together with Roman dancers. He imitates the traditions and customs of the fictitious courts of the Caesars and the Kings of Iran. Their clothes, food, entertainment, decoration, music, poetry, literature, manner of living, city-plans, palaces and socio-political systems have all been altered from the original and simple Arabian styles to modern, civilized and 'revolutionary' Roman styles.

Putting aside arguments of truth and falsehood, oppression and justice, whether Ali is right or Mo'awiyyah is right, from the apparent progress and point of view of civilization, a lot had been done and will continue to be done. Anyhow, renewing the construction of the capital and the tools of respect, the respectful manner of living

of the Caliph and his palaces is the honor and respect of Islam in the eyes of foreigners, Christians and Magians.

On the other hand, comparing the previous regime - that of Hazrat Ali - with the Roman and Iranian regimes, they say that one has to admit that the new Caliphate of the Omayyids is better serving the people and is more useful to them. They make the people behave better - things are smoother and freer. They are also creating respect, power, spoils, benefits, victories, expansion, a good reputation and a sense of importance for Islam. Many temples and churches have been replaced by mosques. There are many cities and towns in the profane lands where the cries of *allaho-akbar* (God is Greater), *la illaha illa lah* (There is no god but God), and *Mohammadin rasulu lah* (Mohammad is the Prophet of God) can now be heard. There are many treasures and spoils running into the public treasury. Even though these funds may not have been obtained properly (that is, justly and according to Islamic principles), they are being used in Islamic countries. Some of the Moslems take advantage of this. Furthermore, these victories create new professions and income for the young people, positions for the nobles and jobs for some of the Moslems.

Therefore, in reply to "What should be done?", they answer, "The idealistic revolutionary standards of Islam at the time of the Prophet should be reviewed. Times have changed and Islam today no longer revolves around Mecca and Medina. It stretches from the Byzantium to Iran. It should therefore, not be influenced by those idealistic desires of Ali and his strict and difficult ways which reach towards complete justice." They run towards Mo'awiyyah. How can one expect the people,

who are being ruled by a Caesar or a King, to tolerate anything but this.

"You must look at the present situation realistically. You must admit that the Omayyid's power, politics, intelligence, wealth and force are serving in the name of Islam and for the purpose of establishing the rituals of Islam in the world, the development and growth of Islam. It is undertaking a struggle with profane religions, enhancing the reputation of Islam, taking the Qoran and the Prophet forward. It is trying to promote the civilization of the Islamic community, to develop cities, raise the standard of living, create social welfare, gain wealth and have the great civilizations of the East and West adapt to it.

"Therefore, in response to 'What should be done?', we say one should do as we have – enter the Omayyid regime. We have seen that interference, internal fighting, political struggles, intellectual and mental debates of right, justice, Imamate, selection, election, virtue, piety, chastity, traditions, innovation, heresy, are all useless and its results are defeat.

"Furthermore, it is not advisable when the Omayyid Caliph is fighting a holy war against Iran and Rome with Christianity and the Magis, profane and external enemies, that a combat on the internal front be undertaken which will cause official Islamic power to be weakened. This will only prohibit its progress.

"All of us with a realistic spirit must discontinue political struggles, choose seclusion, Sufism and piety by accepting the present reality, and try to support the Omayyid regime in its services to the people for Islam. As to its deviations – we should try to correct and amend

them. How can we perform our part? It is obvious — by adhering to the ruling system.

"On the one hand, we can serve the poor people, earn the rights of the oppressed ones, undertake social affairs, help the needy, even be religiously active and propogate religion, promote ideas, reform society, combat against any future corruption when we are part of the ruling system and have an important and high position and profession.

"On the other hand, scholars and men of letters say: 'It is sixty years since the migration. Ali's revolution has been defeated. Hasan, the last leader who opposed oppression, conservatism and ancient traditions which were against people and the divine, had to make peace with Mo'awiyyah, and was poisoned by him. Therefore nothing can be done. It is useless. We should only attend to religious problems, divine knowledge, religious jurisprudence, research, gnostic discoveries and observations and through these means, acquaint the people with Islamic thoughts, ideas and realities and discover the spiritual aspects and scientific secrets of the Qoran.

"We should only undertake research that allows us to sink into divine knowledge and wisdom, metaphoric philosophy, secrets of the Qoran, rhetoric, eloquence, meanings, expressions, innovations, heresy, gathering and collecting the Qoran, training, teaching, writing down hadiths, the study of the behavior of the Prophet, holy wars, jurisprudence, theology, etc. We should concern ourselves with research, training, the propagation of religious knowledge, rituals and roles, promotion of Islamic culture, serving Islam and the Islamic community mentally and scientifically and nothing else!"

It is so wonderful that it is so clear to intellectuals, that is, the followers of Ali, even Ali's family and those who are close to the Prophet's family and the Bani Hashim, that the response to the question, 'What should be done?' is 'Nothing!', because the result of any action is defeat. Nothing can be done. It is the story of Cain and Abel. It is not lawful to stand bare-handed before the sword. It is not permitted. And yet, you are still responsible and will be punished. Has it not been said, "Do not place yourself before death with your own hands."? The jihad, where one's destiny and death is fixed, is certainly suicide. It is to the advantage of the profane and the oppressor. It is useless.[3]

They recommended he remain silent and attend to the religious training of people, teaching the Qoran, promoting religious jurisprudence and repeating the Prophet's Traditions.

So we see that all classes, including those who were in power, religious men, scholars, even Shi'ites - that is, intellectuals who sought out the truth and knew the truth and their social, mental and political policy to be quite clear and distinct - all of them at this time, sixty years after the migration - in reply to the question of the times, without any exception - say 'No!'

There is only one man - a lonely man - who says 'Yes.' What is that yes? It is a response behind which is total inability, total weakness in a time of darkness and silence, against oppression and tyranny, an aware and faithful man who still has the responsibility of the jihad. It is Imam Hosein's command: 'Yes!' There is also a 'must' in his inability. For him it is living in idea and jihad.

Thus, if he is alive, to continue living, he is responsible to fight for an idea. A living man is responsible, not an able man, and who is more alive than Hosein? Who in our history has more right to live and is more worthy to be alive than Hosein?

The soul of humanity, being aware, having faith, being alive, creates the responsibility of jihad in man and Hosein is the highest example of being alive, beloved and aware of humanity.

Ability or inability, weakness or strength, loneliness or crowds only determine the form of the mission and the manner of approaching the responsibility, not its necessity.

He must fight. But he has no arms. Nevertheless it is his duty to fight. Hosein answers his command and he is the only one whose opinion is 'Yes.' He is the only man who in answer to this question in such conditions says, 'Yes!' He is a lonely man. He has left his home in Medina. He has gone from Medina to Mecca as it is the season of the Pilgrimage, beside the Ka'ba, where the people have gathered to say, 'Yes'.

And now, he is leaving Mecca. He is in a hurry. His Pilgrimage is half finished in order to show the world, 'how'.

It is sixty years after the migration, fifty years after the death of the Prophet. All are misssing. Ali is missing. Hasan is missing, Abuzar is missing. Ammar is missing. In the second generation, Hojr is missing and his companions are massacred. The gallows have been dismantled and blood washed away.

Thoughts and ideas have turned to despair, obscurity, deterioration, deviation, silence, fear. Darkness has spread everywhere. Persons like Abu Horareh, Abu Musa, Sho-

reihs, Abu Dardas and those similar to them - those who during the Islamic Revolution, in that glorious period, had boasted and gained such respect - had become disgraced and had evidently made allegiance with profanity and oppression.

The warrior Companions and Emigrants were sticking their heads into the stables of the public treasury. Their stomachs were bloated with food. They had given the hands and arms of jihad to the hands and arms of the executioners and under the guise of need and abjectness they had gathered around Yazid and the shadow of the red sword of security had spread itself all over from Khorasan to Damascus. The massacres, defeats, treacheries, conspiracies, escapes, desertions and black disappointments had spread death all over the empire and had imprisoned the breath within the rib cages:

In the cemetery of the noiseless town, even the hoot of an owl is not heard
Those in pain are keeping soundless silence and the angry people are silent
The clenched fists of warriors have loosened and are disgraced and have turned to begging, hidden or openly.
In the cemetery of the noiseless town, the gallows have been dismantled and the blood washed away.
In their place, bushes of anger and hatred arise and weeds grow up
And - we - angry, dishonest have remained

Now, time awaits one man. Everything is in expectation of a man who embodies the values which are being

destroyed, who embodies the symbols of all of the ideals which have remained friendless and abandoned. The supporters of the manifestation of these ideas and this faith have joined the enemy. Yes. Time is awaiting a man's action. It is sometimes so in history. Sixty years after the migration, fifty years after the death of the Prophet of liberty, justice and the people. The age has arrived where everything is dropping away. All of the aims of the Revolution are destroyed. The fixed faith of the people rests on disappointment.

Yes. In these black times the ignorant aristocracy is being revived. Power is being dressed in piety and sacredness. The desires for liberty and equality created by Islam in the hearts of those sacrificed for power or policy are breaking down. Tribal ignorance has replaced the humanitarian revolution. The true Book has been placed upon the spears of deceit. From the minarets of mosques, the sound of the call to profanity is heard. The golden calf is calling for Unity. Nimroud replaces Abraham. Caesar wears the turban of the Prophet of God. The executioner takes the sword of jihad. Faith turns to narcotics. The labors against profanity and the struggles of the warriors are gone with the wind. In place of these, treasuries are gained for the hypocrites. The jihad has become a means for massacre. The religious taxes are a means of public plunder. The prayer is a means of deceiving the public. Unity has been covered with the mask of profanity. Islam has become a chain of surrendering. The Traditions of the Prophet have become the pillars of rule. The Qoran has become a means of ignorance, the sayings of the Prophet fabricated. Flashes of the sword are once more coming down upon the shoulders.

Nations are being taken into slavery as before. Freedom is interlocked into a permanent chain. Thoughts are imprisoned in jails and remain silent. The masses have surrendered. The free have been captured. The foxes are being kept warm. Wolves are being fed. Tongues are either sold for gold, shut off by force or cut off by the blade.

The respect and honor which the Companions had gathered in the period of faith and jihad, during the Revolution, at a costly price, have all sold out at cheap rates and have exchanged the past respect with civil governorship. They had avoided the risks of revolt by withholding their shoulders of responsibility and escaped into secure corners and pure, restful asceticism thereby earning their health and safety in a respectful way, replacing their silence against oppression, submitting to the profane. Or they have been killed in the Rabazeh desert or the Azra grazing field.

Now, religion and the world are running in favor of profanity and oppression. Swords are broken. Throats are cut. Gallows have been dismantled. The blood has been washed away.

The waves of revolution, the shouts of protest, the flames of rebellion have all been calmed. Excitement and enthusiasm have diminished. Shadows of fear and strangulation have spread over the cemeteries of martyrs as well as on the cold and silent cemetery of the living. There is not even the hoot of an owl to be heard in the ruined place of the faith and hope of the Moslems.

New ignorance blackens heaven. It is more savage than the previous ignorance. The enemy is more intelligent, more victorious and more aware than the former.

Intellectuals have tasted the bitter experiences of the rebels which resulted in their defeat and martyrdom.

Suddenly a spark appears in the darkness and bursts through the silence. The radiant visage of 'a martyr who walks alive upon the earth'. From the depths of darkness, the immense corruptions and obscure nights of despair, the light and powerful feature of 'a hope' is seen.

Once more, from the silent and sorrowful home of Fatima, the little house which is greater than the whole of history, a man emerges — angry, determined, in a state of rebellion against all of the palaces of cruelty and fronts of power. He is as a mountain which holds a volcano within it or as a hurricane like the one God sent to the tribe of 'Ad.

A man emerges from Fatima's house. He looks at Medina and the mosque of the Prophet, Mecca and Abraham, the Ka'ba which is enchained by Nimroud, Islam and the message of Mohammad, the Green Palace of Damascus, the hungry people, the slaves and . . .

A man emerges from Fatima's house. The load of all of the responsibilities has been placed upon his shoulders. He is heir of the great suffering human being. He is the only successor to Adam, Abraham, Mohammad . . . a lonely man.

But no! A woman has come out of Fatima's house with him, walking side by side with him. She bears half of the heavy mandate of her brother upon her shoulders.

A man emerges from Fatima's house. Alone, friendless, with empty hands he confronts the terror the darkness and the sword. He has only one weapon — death. But he is the son of the family who has learned the art of dying well in the school of life. There is no one in the whole

world who knows 'how to die' better than he does. His powerful enemy who is ruling the world is deprived of this knowledge. It is because of this that this lonely hero is so confident of his victory over the immense army of his enemy and so determined. He confronts it without doubt.

The great teacher of martyrdom has now arisen in order to teach those who consider the jihad to relate only to those who have ability and victory to be only in conquering. Martyrdom is not a loss, it is a choice, a choice, whereby the warrior sacrifices himself on the threshold of the temple of freedom and the altar of love and is victorious.

Hosein, the heir of Adam, who gives life to the children of mankind, and the successor of the great prophets, who taught mankind 'how to live', has now come to teach mankind 'how to die'.

Hosein teaches that 'black death' is the miserable fate of a humbled people who accept scorn in order to remain alive. For death chooses those who are not brave enough to choose martyrdom. Death chooses them!

The word *shahid,* martyr, contains the highest form of what I am saying. It means, being present, bearing witness, one who bears witness. It also means that which is sensible and perceptible, the one who all turn towards. Finally, it means, model, pattern, example.

**Martyrdom: To arise and bear witness** in our culture and in our religion is not a bloody and accidental happening. In other religions and tribal histories, martyrdom is the sacrificing of the heroes who are killed in the battles of the enemy. It is considered to be a sorrowful accident full of misery. Those who are killed in this way are called

martyrs and their death is called martyrdom.

But in our culture, martyrdom is not a death which is imposed by an enemy upon our warriors. It is a death which is desired by our warrior, selected with all of the awareness, logic, reasoning, intelligence, understanding, consciousness and alertness that a human being has.

Look at Hosein. He releases his life, leaves his town and arises in order to die because he has no other means for his struggle to condemn and disgrace his enemy. He selects this in order to render aside the deceiving curtains which cover the ugly faces of the ruling power. If he cannot defeat the enemy in this way, at least he can disgrace them. If he cannot conquer the ruling power, he can at least condemn it by injecting new blood and the belief of jihad into the dead bodies of this second generation of the Revolution revealed to the Prophet.

He is an unarmed, powerless and lonely man. But he is still responsible for the jihad. He has no other means except to die, having himself selected a 'red death'. Being Hosein makes him responsible to perform the jihad against all that is corrupt and cruel. He has no other means at his disposal for his jihad but his own death. He takes it and leaves his home only to enter the place of execution.

We see how well he carried this out with his accurate plans, reasoning, a glorious, accurate and well-planned departure, movement and migration. Stage by stage, he clears the way, explaining the aim which he is 'moving towards', with a unique selection of companions — men who had come to die with him — as well as all of the members of his family. These are all of the things that he possesses in this world and he leads them to be sacrified at the altar of martyrdom.

The fate of faith which is being destroyed, the fate of those people who are awaiting Islamic justice and freedom but have now been captured by an oppression and pressure worse than the period of ignorance, are now awaiting his action.

He who has no arms and no means has come with all of his existence, his family, his dearest companions so that the martyrdom of himself and his whole family will bear witness to the fact that he carried out his responsibility at a time when truth was defenseless and unarmed. He bears witness that nothing more than this could be done.

You have heard that at the battle of Ashura, on the tenth day of the month of Moharram, Imam Hosein takes the blood flowing from the throat of his child, Ali Asghar, in his hands and throws it up to the heavens saying, "Look! Accept this sacrifice from me. Be my witness, my God!"

It is in this period that 'dying' for a human being guarantees the 'life' of a nation. His martyrdom is a means whereby faith can remain. It bears witness to the fact that great crimes, deception, oppression and tyranny rule. It proves that truth is being denied. It reveals the existence of values which are destroyed and forgotten. It is a red protest against a black sovereignity. It is a shout of anger in the silence which has cut-off the tongues.

Martyrdom bears witness to that which they desire to remain hidden in history. It is the symbol of that which must exist. It is bearing witness to what is taking place in this silent and secret time and finally, martyrdom is the only reason for existence, the only sign of being present, the only means of attack and defense and the

only manner of resistance so that truth, right and justice can remain alive in a time and under a regime in which uselessness, falsity and oppression rule.

He has defeated all of the bases. He has massacred all of the defenders and faithful followers. 'Being human' is to stand at the threshold of decline and the danger of dying forever. All of these miracles are performed by martyrdom: arising and bearing witness.

Sixty years after the migration, a saviour should appear and arise upon this black and silent graveyard. And Hosein, aware of his mandate which history's hatred of humanity has put upon his shoulders, leaves Mecca without hesitation and moves towards his place of martyrdom. He knows that history is waiting for him. Time, which is held in the hands of reactionaries and polytheists, watchs for him to take a step forward.

People who are captured, motionless and in silence, in slavery, badly need his movement and his cries. Finally, the mission which is now in the hands of devils, commands his death so that with it he can bear witness to the disaster. It is said that the Prophet had said to him, "God wishes to see you killed."

Martyrdom also has a special meaning in our humanistic philosophy. The creation of a mankind who is a blend of God and the devil, a mixture of the spirit and clay and the combination of the lowest and highest peaks, in the composition of religion and its recitals, devotions, prayers, jurisprudence, good-deeds, services, science and all of these are only struggles and exercises made by man in order to weaken his inferior being in favor of his superior being and his devil clay part in favor of his divine spiritual part. But martyrdom is the action which a man

suddenly and in a revolutionary way performs and throws his inferior being into the fire of a love and a faith and turns it into a light and divine being.

It is for this reason that a martyr does not need to perform the ablution, has no shroud and does not need to give any account on the Day of Judgement. A martyr has already sacrificed the being of error and sin prior to death and now has arisen to bear witness.

It is for this reason that on the evening before Ashura, Imam Hosein washes himself carefully, shaves so keenly, puts on his best clothes, uses the best perfumes. Amidst the flow of the blood of death he destroys all of his belongings and on the threshold of his departure, seeing that the number of martyrs increase as they fall upon each other, his fate turns more red and more exciting. His heart beats faster with enthusiasm. He knows that the distance to his 'presence' is shortening and that martyrdom itself is presence.

Martyrdom, in summary, in our culture, contrary to other schools where it is considered to be an accident, an involvement, a death imposed upon a hero, a tragedy, is a grade, a level, a rank. It is not a means but it is a goal itself. It is originality. It is a completion. It is a lift. It itself is mid-way to the highest peak of humanity and it is a culture.

In all ages and centuries, when the followers of a faith and an idea, have power, they guarantee their honor and lives with jihad. But when they are weakened and have no means whereby to struggle, they guarantee their lives, movements, faith, respect, honor, future and history with martyrdom. Martyrdom is an invitation to all ages and generations that if you cannot kill, die.

## Chapter Two: A Prayer

I am not used to praying at the end of a lecture because I know with all humility that I am not worthy to pray. But I would like, with your permission, to give some prayers about how things should be and are not, no matter what anyone may say.

It has been mentioned in our prayer books and Alexis Carrel also mentioned that a prayer should be like a child speaks with his father. The more spontaneous it is, the better it will be accepted.

Dear friends. We are living in most difficult times. All of my hope and faith are devoted to you young people. Those who are mature have reached a position, are educated and have social respect. Those who have wealth and an honorable position, their responsibilities are no more than to protect what they have gathered. But fortunately, you who are still deprived may do something for our salvation which will otherwise be forgotten and destroyed.

Oh, God, You who rendered generosity to the sons of Adam, You who placed Your trust upon the shoulders of the children of Adam, You who selected all of Your prophets to teach the Book and establish justice, You who say that greatness belongs to You, Your prophets and those who are faithful, we are Your people.

We have faith in You and the message of Your prophets. We ask for freedom, awareness, justice and

greatness. Grant us these as we are greatly in need of them. More so that at any other time we are sacrificed by slavery, ignorance and weakness.

Oh, God of those who are deprived. You who have blessed the deprived upon the earth, those masses who are condemned to being weak and deprived in life and those who are enslaved throughout history and are sacrificed to oppression and the plunder of time, we are the wretched of hell on earth. Cause us to rise up to lead mankind and become the inheritors of the earth. The time has arrived. The deprived of the earth await Your promise. You who have glory within your family of man, at present, only have the deprived masses worshipping You.

Oh, God, You made all of Your angels prostrate themselves before Adam. Do You not see that all of the children of Adam are being made to prostrate themselves before the devils of the earth? Release the children of Adam from the bonds of slavery of the idols of this century, whom we ourselves have created. Help us to find salvation in our servitude and obedience to You.

Oh, God, destroy those who rule the world, who deny Your signs, kill Your prophets and destroy those who have arisen in revolt among the masses. Invite the people to justice and equity.

Oh, God, give responsibility to our religious scholars, wisdom to our masses, light and awareness to our faithful, faith to our intellectuals, understanding to our righteous people, enthusiasm to our miserable, comprehension to our women, honor to our men, awareness to our aged, geniuseness to our youth, ideas to our professors, ideas as well to our students. Awaken those who are asleep.

Give determination to those who have awoken, truth to our propagators, religion to our religious ones, committment to our writers, pain to our artists, understanding to our poets, a goal to our scholars, hope to the hopeless.

Give strength to our deprived, a shock to our conservatives, cause those who are seated to arise. Give movement to those who are stilled, life to our dead, sight to the blind, cries to the silenced, the Qoran to our Moslems, Ali to our Shi'ites, unity to our sects. Cure those who are jealous. Give justice to the conceited, manners to those who abuse, patience to our mojaheds, self-consciousness to our people, and give all of our nation the aspiration to persevere. Teach us unselfishness, the merit of salvation and self-respect.

O God of the Ka'ba! Do not allow these people of the world who pray morning and night, oriented towards Your house, who circumambulate around the home of Your Abraham, to be the sacrifices of ignorance and blasphemy and to be put in bondage by the oppressions of the oppressors of the times like Nimroud.

And you, oh Mohammad, the Prophet of awareness, freedom and power! A fire has been started in your home and it is spreading. A destructive flood is coming from the West upon your land. Your family has for many centuries remained asleep in the black bed of abjectness. Awaken them! As God has said, "Arise and remind them."

And you, oh Ali. You who are entitled Lion of God, man of God and of the people, Lord of love and of the word. We have lost our worthiness to know you. They have removed 'knowing you' from our minds but our love for you continues to exist. It has caught on fire in the

depths of our conscience and the membranes of our heart. How can you leave your lovers in abasement? You who could not bear the slightest oppression towards a Jewish woman who was living under an Islamic government, now look at the Moslems who are living under Jewish oppression. See what is happening to them. Oh, Ali, the possessor of the arm which holds the sword, one strike of which is worth more than all the prayers of this world and the next. Strike another blow!

And you two – brother and sister – Hosein and Zainab – you two gave meaning to 'being human', gave hope to faith, gave spirit to living with your glorious deaths. Yes, you two. Since that painful day of Ashura where even the imagination trembles out of fear and the heart breaks from the pain, the eyes of this nation have never stopped crying. The masses of our people have been crying out of your love and for your pain, for centuries. Is it not true that love speaks the language of tears? A nation, throughout the whole of its history, moans from the pain you suffered. In spite of whip lashes, floggings, massacres and torture because of their love for you, they have never, not even for a moment, discontinued the repetition of your names upon their lips. They have never forgotten to remember you. The fire of their love for you has never diminished. With each blow of the jailer's whips, the sign of their love for you has been imprinted upon their backs and their sides.

And, you, oh, Zainab! Daughter of Ali. You who have Ali's tongue, speak with your community. Oh, woman whose courage has taught courage to your people. Mention your name in the hearts and souls of the women of our nation who desperately need you to put the fire of

love and pain in their souls. They need you now more than ever before. On the one hand, ignorance has placed them in slavery and abasement. On the other hand, the West pulls them towards a hidden enslavement and a modern type of abjectness, and makes them become strangers to you and to themselves. Help them to revolt against their old and new foolish ways, from the slavery of corrupted traditions and invitations which are foul, from being tools of the old strict traditions and new amusements.

Give them the strength to utter the same cry that you gave which resounded through a town, the town of cruelty and terror, which caused the pillars of a palace to tremble, the Green Palace of treachery so that they might rebel inside themselves and by doing so, tear off the threads woven by the deceitful spider until they learn to stand against this destructive storm which has started to blow. Break the mechanisms which are making a new kind of fool out of her to further humiliate her by using her to fill their leisure time and for the greedy mouths of the capitalists who introduce her to the market. They do this to give pleasure to the dirty desires of the bourgeoisie, to create excitement in the halls which are no more than motionless, sad places of entertainment of the 'new aristocracy' and for the amusement of empty, aimless and the sad life of 'the comfortable community'. Save her by your leadership from the old slavery (of the *haram*) and new, disgraceful markets (of the *bazaars*).

Oh you who are Ali's tongue.

Oh you who bear Hossein's mission upon your shoulders.

Oh you who came from Karbala and declare the message of the martyrs to the ears of history in the middle

of the everlasting tumult of iron bars and the executioners.

Oh, Zainab, speak with us. Do not tell us what happened to you.

Do not tell us what you saw in that red desert.

Do not tell us the extent of the crimes which were committed.

Do not tell us how God on that day demonstrated the dearest and most glorious values and greatness which He had created along the Forat River and on the burnt sands of the Taf desert and presented this to His angels for them to come to know why they should prostrate themselves to Adam.

Do not tell us what happened to you there.

Do not tell us what friends and enemies did.

Oh messenger of Hosein's Revolution, we all know. We have heard it all. You have passed on the messages of the martyrs. You, yourself are the martyr who made words from her blood, as your brother who spoke with each drop of his blood.

But, sister, tell us what we should do? For a moment, look at how we are all suffering!

Listen for a moment while we share our troubles with you, our dearest sister.

It is you who must cry for us.

You — the faithful messenger of your brother.

You — who leaving Karbala, passed over to all generations and carried the message of the martyrs.

You who come from the red garden of martyrdom wearing the perfume of a newly blossomed flower of that place within your dress.

Oh daughter of Ali. Oh, sister! Oh leader of the

caravan of the captured. Take us also with that caravan.

But, oh, Hosein, What can I say to you? What can I say to you on such a dark night in the middle of an ocean, afraid of the waves and the terrible whirlpool.

You are the lamp which shows the way, the ship of salvation. The blood of yours which was spilt is ever rising where there is deceit. It flows in the stream of time and passes over all generations. It is the blood which saturates any fruitful land, causes the worthy seeds to open underneath the earth and brings a dry plant into being.

You the great teacher of the martyrdom, make thunder from that light our dark and hopeless bed chamber. Drops of that rushing blood flows in our dry and semi-dead streams. Render a bit of the fire of that firing desert to our cold and frozen winter!

You have selected red-death in order to release your lovers from the black-death. Still with every drop of your blood, you give life to a nation, make the heart of history beat, give heat to the depressed crops of each age, give the excitement of life as well as hope and love.

Our faith, our nation, our history of tomorrow, the people of our age all need you and your blood.

## Chapter Three: After Martyrdom

Sisters and brothers!

Now the martyrs have died, but we dead are alive. The martyrs spoke their words and we remain deaf to their advice. They were brave enough to choose death when they were no longer able to remain alive.

They have left but we shamelessly remain. We have remained for hundreds of years. It is conceivable that people will laugh at us; that we, manifestations of abjectness and humility, are crying for Hosein and Zainab, manifestations of glory and greatness.

It is another one of the oppressions of history that we humiliated cry and mourn for those noble, great, dear honored ones. Today the martyrs proclaim their message with their blood. They sit opposite us in order to invite those seated to arise.

In our culture, in our religion, in our Shi'ite history, humanity has created the most powerful life-giving germs that give life and excitement to history and divine lessons which teach man how to arise and reach God, heirs of all of the dear, divine assets are in the hands of the abject and humble and yet they are hidden.

We are heirs to the dearest savings which have been gathered by jihads, martyrdoms and the sacrificing of the most noble values of humanity. We are heirs to all of these and we are responsible to be an example of a 'Com-

munity' *(ommat)* for humanity. As we are told in the Qoran, "We made you, the modest community, in order for you to bear witness to other people as the messenger bears witness to you." So we are responsible, with this precious inheritance, to our martyrs, warriors, leaders, commanders, faithful and our Book, to make a model community in order to bear witness to the people of the world and be the messengers to bear witness to this.

Such a mandate is a heavy one. The mandate of giving life, living and causing movement in humanity has been given to us, we who are unable to carry out our ordinary lives. Oh, my God! What wisdom is hidden in this? We who are drawn into foulness and our routine animal-like life, should we mourn and arrange lamentation ceremonies for men, women and children who in Karbala have proven martyrdom and who bear witness in history, in the presence of God and in the presence of freedom, forever?

Oh, God! What type of oppression is once more being committed against Hosein's family? The martyrs have finished their jobs. Now, in the middle of the night we are mourning for them and announce the end of their task. And you see, under the shelter of crying for Hosein and love of Hosein, how we co-operate with Yazid who also wished to see this story end. The martyrs have finished their task and are silent but everyone of them played their role perfectly.

The teacher, the person who calls out the time of prayer, young people, children, women, master and servant can all be representatives of a class who select a living death. These martyrs performed two jobs – from Hosein's child to his brother – from his servant to him-

self – from the reciter of the Qoran to the teacher of the Kufa children – from the one who calls out the time of prayer to those related or strangers to one another – from the nobles and respected ones of society to the ordinary man who held no respect in society – all stood as brothers, equal before martyrdom in order to teach all the men, women, children, old and young of history: **How they should live if they could and how they should die if they could not.**

Any one of these martyrs is a represental of his own class and yet showed another aim. They bore witness with their blood not with their words. They condemned the ruling system in the court of human history which determines the history of man, a system which employs policy, economics, religion, art, philosophy, thought, feelings, ethics and humanity in such a way as to sacrifice its people for the sake of its system. They condemn, by their martyrdom, all groups of people and human values which are used to build a support system for an oppressive and criminal government.

There is one ruler over history, one oppressor who rules history, one executioner who creates martyrs. Throughout history many have been the sacrificed of this executioner. Many women have been silenced by the whips of this executioner. At the price of much blood, desolate places have flourished. The hungry, the slaves, women and children have been massacred as well as men, heroes, servants, teachers throughout all ages and all generations.

Now, Hosein, with everything he owns in the world, beside the Forat River, has come to bear witness in the presence of history to the oppressed of history, to all of the condemned of this executioner who rules history.

He has come to bear witness with his son, Ali Akbar, as to how this executioner, Zahhak, has eaten the brains of youth throughout history.

He has come to bear witness as to how a hero dies in a criminal regime and the regime of criminals by sacrificing himself. He has come to bear witness with his sister, Zainab, to a system which has ruled throughout history, that women should either select slavery and thus remain in harems or by choosing freedom, they should remain as martyrs and thereby lead the caravan of the captured.

He has come to bear witness with his small child, Ali Asghar, that the oppressive and criminal regime and the oppressive executioner does not even show mercy towards suckling children.

Hosein has come with his whole existence in order to bear witness in the criminal court of history on behalf of those who have been martyred and have died defenseless and in silence.

Now the court has ended with the martyrdom of Hosein, with his sacrificing all of his dearest property and any possibility which he possessed. He has performed his great divine mission.

My dear friends! In the Shi'ism which we see where anyone who discusses the pure, aroused and awakened Shi'ite, prior to being defeated by the enemy, is sacrificed by friends, there exists an important and great teaching and message as well as great and divine values. He is a valuable resource which gives a living spirit to society, nations, race and history.

One of the most important life-giving sources which exists in the history of Shi'ites is martyrdom. As Jalal al-Ahmad has said, "We have forgotten the tradition of

martyrdom and have changed into those who are only guarding the cemeteries of martyrs. We are bearers of the black death."

Instead of being Ali, Hosein and Zainab's Shi'ites, that is, followers of martyrs, we have remained in everlasting mourning. How intelligently we have altered the message of Hosein and his great, dear and everlasting friends. This message is addressed to all men.

What does it mean when Hosein who sees all of his dear ones are killed and there is no one in front of him except the hated and plundering enemy, cries out, "Is there anyone who can help me?" Does he not know that there is no one who can help him? He has asked this question before the future history of man. This question is addressed to the future and to us. This question expresses what Hosein expects from his lovers. With this question, he announced his invitation to all who respect martyrdom and martyrs.

But we diminished this invitation, his expectation of assistance, the message of Hosein who asks Shi'ites and his followers in every age and generation for help. Instead, we announce to the people that Hosein needs tears and weeping and has no other message. He has died and requires only lamentation and is not a martyr who bore witness, a person who requires followers at all times and in all places. Yes, they have told us to continue saying, "No."

Every revolution has two visages. The first visage is blood and the second is a message. Martyrdom means bearing witness. Those who themselves select the red-death in order to show their love of the truth which is being destroyed and which is the single weapon for jihad are

the values which are diminishing.

It is to be present, alive, a witness not only in the presence of God but in the audience of the people and in every age, century, time and place. Those who bear humility in order to remain alive are silent and the dirty dead of history. But those who select their own death and with generosity have come with Hosein to be slaughtered, while hundreds of religious arguments permit them to remain alive, they made no arguments and died. Are they alive or those who left Hosein and accepted abjection and inferiority in obeying Yazid in order to remain? Which ones are still alive? They are alive who do not consider life to be a moving body. They are alive who feel the existence of Hosein and who bear witness to his existence with all of their own being. They are alive who see those who remain humble in order to remain alive as being dead.

They show and martyrs show, teach and bear the message that being unable does not release your duty to stand against oppression and injustice. Martyrdom does not accept the argument that victory is only in conquering the enemy. A martyr is a person who when unable to conquer the enemy gains victory with his own death and if he cannot defeat the enemy, he disgraces him.

A martyr is the heart of history. In the same way that the heart gives blood to the body, a martyr gives it to history. In a society which is dying, in a society where its people are losing their faith, in a society which is involved with gradual death, in a society which accepts surrendering, in a society where responsibility is ignored, in a society where the belief of being human has been forgotten, in a society which ceases in its productivity,

and movement, a martyr, as a heart, gives blood to the dry dead and motionless corpses of society.

The most important miracle of his martyrdom is that he gives a new faith to a generation. Thus a martyr is ever present and ever-lasting!

Who is absent? Hosein has taught us another more important lesson than his martyrdom and that is that he does not finish his Pilgrimage but puts his being martyred even before it. He does not finish the Pilgrimage which is a renewal of his ancestor's struggle – the struggle of his grandfather and his father. He does not finish the Pilgrimage but choses martyrdom. He does not finish the ceremony of the Pilgrimage in order to teach all of the pilgrims of history, in order to answer all of the prayers of history, addressing all of the faithful followers of Abraham **if there is no imamate or leadership, if no goals exist, if no Hosein exists but Yazid exists, circumambulating around the House of God is equal to circumambulating around a house of idols.**

When Hosein interrupted his Pilgrimage ceremonies and left for Karbala, those who continued their circumambulation in the absence of Imam Hosein are equivalent to those who circumambulate around the Green Palace of Mo'awiyyah because a martyr is one who is present. He is present in all areas of truth and falsehood, in all jihads between oppression and justice. He is present and the intention of his presence is to give this message to all men: **if you are not present on the battlefield of truth and falsity, it makes no difference where you are. If you do not bear witness to the battle between truth and falsity during your age, it makes no difference what you are doing. Whether you be at prayer or you be drinking it is the same thing.**

Martyrdom bears witness to the permanent battlefield of history between the truth and falsity. And absence? All of those who left Hosein alone and were not present and did not accompany him in martyrdom are all equal – whether they be those who left Hosein alone and went to Yazid and worked as his agents or whether they be those who, in expectation of paradise, went to altars of prayer with security and peace and left Hosein alone, who in order to avoid the troubles of conflicts between truth and falsity, ran away to corners of the altars or houses only to pray to God or those who kept silent because they were frightened.

Where Hosein is present – and he is present in every century and in every age – anyone who does not stand beside him, whether they be believers or atheists, criminals or virtuous peoples – they are all equal.

According to a principle of Shi'ite ideology, the nature of each act depends upon imamate, leadership and governorship. Without it, everything is meaningless and we see that it is meaningless.

Now, Hosein has announced his presence to all ages, against all generations, in all battles, in all jihads, upon all of the battlefields of the earth and of the age. He has died in Karbala in order to cause all ages and generations to arise.

And you and I – we must cry in our misery that we are not present. Every revolution has two visages: blood and a message. Hosein and his companions undertook the first mission of blood.

The second mission of martyrdom, the burden of bearing the message which is announced to the world is given to Zainab – a woman whose courage is something

for all to learn from. The mission of Zainab is heavier and more difficult to bear than her brother's mission. Those who have the courage to select their own death have simply made a great choice, but the responsibility of those who remain is most difficult. Zainab has remained. The caravan of slaves follows behind her. The ranks of the enemy are in front of her. The announcement of her brother's mission rests solely upon her shoulders. She enters the town. She is coming from the battlefield. She has left behind a red garden of martyrdom and the perfume of the red flowers spreads from her skirts. She enters the criminal city, the capital of power, oppression and execution.

With peace, she victoriously announces to the powers and cruel people, the enslaved agents, executioners, the remnants of colonialization and dictatorship: "Thank you God for all the generosity and greatness which you gave to our family: the honor of prophecy and the honor of martyrdom!"

Zainab bears the responsibility of announcing the message of those who bore witness but are silent because she had remained and must now speak for the martyrs, whose tongues have been silenced by the executioners.

If blood has no message, it will remain unspoken in history. If blood does not extend its message to all generations, the executioner will imprison it in a certain time and age. If Zainab does not announce the message of Karbala to history, Karbala will remain silent and those who need such a message will fail to receive it. The message of those who speak with their blood will reach no one.

This is why the mission of Zainab is so heavy and difficult. The message of Zainab is for all human beings —

to all of those who cry for the death of Hosein, to all who incline their heads towards the threshold of Hosein's faith, to all of those who believe as Hosein that 'life is nothing but faith and jihad'.

Zainab's message — "Any of you who are related to or committed to this family — anyone who is faithful to the mission of Mohammad — you must think and select — in every age, every generation, in whatever land you may be, you must listen to the message of the martyrs of Karbala who said:

'Those can live well who can die well.'

"You who believe in the message of divine unity and the Qoran as well as the way of Ali and his family and you who will come after us, the message of our family to humanity is the art of how to live well and how to die well.

"If you are religious, you have a responsibility to your religion. A liberated person also has a responsibility towards human liberty. Witness your time. Witness the conflict between the truth and falsehood of your age. Wherever our martyrs bear witness, they are aware and alive and always present. They are a symbol and bear witness to the truth and falsity, the destiny and fate of humanity."

A martyr embraces all of these. Each revolution has two visages: blood and a message. Anyone who has chosen the responsibility of accepting truth, anyone who knows what a Shi'ite's responsibility means, anyone who understands the responsibility of the freedom of humanity, must know that in the permanent battle of history — **everywhere and everyplace, all fields are Karbala, all months are Moharram, all days are Ashura** and thus one

must choose: either blood or bearing the message, to be either Hosein or Zainab, to die like Hosein or remain like Zainab, if he does not want to be absent and always wants to have presence.

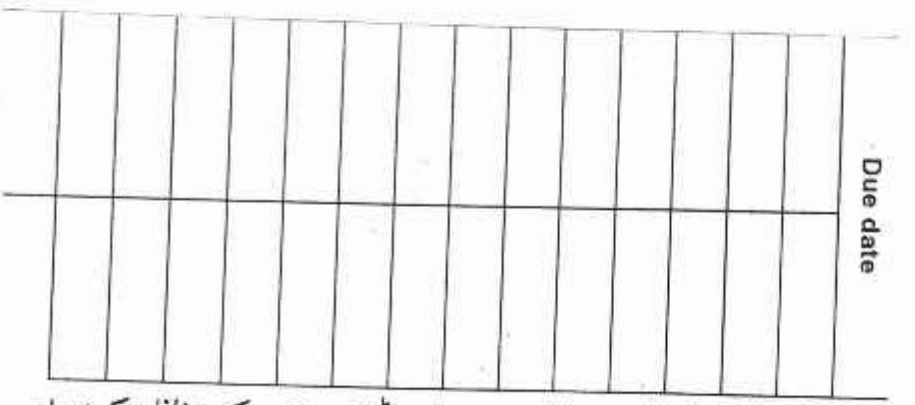
I sincerely apologize to the audience. Time has passed and there is no further opportunity. There is so much to be said. How can one completely express the miracle of Hosein in one lecture and Zainab who completed it. What I want to say is a long story but in summary, the mission of Zainab after martyrdom is:

Those who died committed a Hoseinic act.
Those who remain must perform a Zainabic act.
Otherwise, they are Yazids.

1. This paragraph and the next are excerpted from Shariati's book, *Shi'ism.*

2. It is not accidental that Omar Khayyam is being revived in our culture. After the Second World War he met the desires of all of the people of the world. Not the scientist Khayyam, mind you, but the poet! Not the genius Khayyam with his miraculous arithmetic thoughts but the cunning Khayyam who recited some poems. It is not without purpose that the majority of orientalists, Islamologists and Iranologists write such huge tomes on the various aspects of cultures and civilizations and show such interest in the revival of Sufism. While over seventy percent of our scientific, literary, Islamic, historical, philosophical and artistic works remain as hand-written copies in the store-rooms of public or private libraries, works on Sufism are printed in several forms and editions. It is true that everything which happens has a purpose which is unknown to us and everything is ruled by fate, wishes, fatalism and destiny but not divine wisdom, fatalism and destiny but by masters, not in heaven but upon the earth.

3. One must remember the advice of the kind and sympathetic relatives of Imam Hosein who prohibited such arguments and even encouraged him to stay like Abdullah ibn Jafar, the husband of the great Zainab. She divorced him in order to be free to follow Imam Hosein and Mohammad Hanifeh, the half-brother of Imam Hosein.

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